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ABSTRACT

The report describes the third and final year of a 3-year case study of the technical assistance process as implemented by the Technical Assistance Development System (TADS) for the staffs of two demonstration programs for preschool handicapped children and their families. Following a review of TADS and the two demonstration programs, the development of the conceptual framework for the study is recounted. The bulk of the report is devoted to case reports of the technical assistance delivery process as it occurred during fiscal year 1981-82. A story-telling approach is used to present the observations regarding settings, individuals, events, and interactions. Processes described include initial needs assessments, phone conferences, followups, on-site and off-site consultations, and final interviews. (CL)

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A Case Study of Technical Assistance to Demonstration Programs for Young Handicapped Children

Part III

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

In the following pages, the authors of this report have attempted to describe the development, conduct, and results of the third and final year of a three-year case study of the technical assistance process. The focus of the study was technical assistance as it is developed and exercised by the Technical Assistance Development System (TADS) and provided to the staffs of two demonstration programs for preschool handicapped children and their families.

The impetus for conducting such a study sprang from a desire to understand better the complex nature of technical assistance and to identify additional factors that influence its success. Throughout its years of operation, TADS has evolved a comprehensive set of processes for gathering information regarding its technical assistance. The results of the assistance are monitored continuously by the TADS staff through a series of carefully structured evaluation forms. These forms are completed by client participants and by technical assistance providers for each technical assistance activity. Summaries of the results have provided indicators of effectiveness relative to specific variables considered to be important to the success of technical assistance.

This survey-based evaluation methodology has been useful and informative but, by its nature, is restricted to the questions asked. TADS staff members and others have been interested in obtaining a more comprehensive portrait of the technical assistance process as it actually operates. Case study methodology, with its characteristic of providing in-depth descriptions of processes, has for some time been an inquiry method of interest for obtaining the information that TADS staff and others were seeking.

In planning for the case study the TADS staff determined that the purpose of the case study effort would be to understand better the complex nature of technical assistance and to identify additional factors that influence its success. In addition, the study was to be used to explore further the feasibility of the case study approach as a method for gathering such information.

Three reports, one for each year of the study, have been prepared. Those interested in the first two case descriptions and results should refer to the references listed at the end of this report (Behr, Hawes, Vandiviere and Suarez, 1981; 1982). This particular report contains the case reports and study results for the third year of the study and a summary of the results for all three years. Specifically, the report contains:

1. a description of the context in which the study took place and the sites and persons who were involved (Section II),

2. a brief description of the development of the conceptual framework for the study and a delineation of modifications for this year (Section III),

3. the two case reports (Section IV),

4. a discussion of the findings or "learnings" regarding technical assistance from the third year cases (Section V),

5. a discussion of the findings or "learnings" regarding technical assistance for all three years of the study (Section VI), and

6. a discussion regarding case study methodology as a technique for describing and discovering new knowledge of efforts such as technical assistance (Section VII),

SECTION II

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AND PERSONS INVOLVED

The context in which the study was conducted includes the technical assistance system (TADS) and its procedures, and the two selected case study sites (Projects "Early Start" and "Co-Op"). The persons involved include the providers of TADS services, whether TADS staff members or external consultants; personnel at the two case study sites; the case study observers; and the members of the TADS staff.

The Technical Assistance System

The Technical Assistance Development System (TADS) was established in 1971 to assist in the development of the Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP). Approved by Congress in 1968 and administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education (now Special Education Programs), HCEEP provides grants to public and private nonprofit agencies for the development and implementation of model programs to demonstrate high-quality services for young handicapped children and their families. TADS provides comprehensive and systematic support to HCEEP grantees through the delivery of informational and consultative services, called technical assistance.

Stedman (1976) described the technical assistance system as a communication network:

> Members initiate and maintain communication around specific problems and about strategies to solve the problems...The structure and function of the system are partly determined by the content or information the system is appointed to deliver, partly by the characteristics of the "customers," or client organizations, and partly by the character and style of the technical assistance organization's membership...(p.3)

Lillie and Black (1976) extended this view in their description of

the TADS system of technical assistance delivery. They described the system as having five interlocking phases:

1. developing a program plan for each project
2. assessing needs of each project in relationship to its plan
3. developing a written agreement for technical assistance according to the project needs
4. delivering technical assistance through
   a. TADS-sponsored activities at the project site or in conference or workshop settings
   b. services to the project from the TADS office, or
   c. printed materials prepared by TADS
5. evaluating the effectiveness of the technical assistance.

TADS now assists projects in managing their programs and accomplishing their goals through a broad range of systematic support and consultative services. Access to expertise not available locally, and to materials designed specifically for projects, is available through TADS. TADS also provides opportunities to increase collaboration and information-sharing among projects. TADS services are provided at no extra cost to projects. Project participation in technical assistance is encouraged but voluntary.

The Clients of the Technical Assistance System

The clients of TADS for this case study study are three-year demonstration projects for preschool handicapped children and their families. The projects are a component of HCEEP and are funded and administered by the U.S. Office of Special Education. Their purpose is to demonstrate and disseminate model services for preschool handicapped children and

their families. Because the projects operate under legislation and regulations governing HCEEP, they are similar in their overall purpose and the major areas to which their staffs devote their energies; e.g., developing model services for children and their families, increasing staff skills, demonstrating the model to others, and disseminating information about their program. The projects differ in areas such as year of funding, setting for services, theoretical and philosophical bases for services, and type and age of child served.

Selection of the Case Study Sites

It was recognized early in the planning that comprehensive observations and interviews with the selected projects would be essential in order to obtain adequate descriptions of the technical assistance process. Resources were available to include two sites in the study. A portrait was desired that would include the stages of the introduction of technical assistance to a project through the termination of technical assistance at the end of the projects' HCEEP funding. Projects in their first year of operation were, therefore, selected at the outset. In addition, projects were selected to permit observation of at least some variation in the delivery of technical assistance. The criteria for selection, therefore, included such factors as noticeable differences in staff, target population, and administrative location and structure. Other criteria were the agreement of the project's administrator to serve as a case study site and location of the project where travel expenses could be kept to a minimum.

Because the purpose of the study was to describe the technical assistance process, and not the overall development of the client projects, the location and personnel of the projects were kept confidential. This stance was taken to protect the clients and to encourage their participation and information-sharing. It was also taken to limit biases in the interpretation of results which might occur if actual locations and participants were known. Precise descriptions of sites, created to disguise their location but not their purpose and structure, are given in Section IV. The sites are known to us as "Project Early Start" and "Project Co-Op."

Persons Involved in the Technical Assistance

The focus of TADS technical assistance, and therefore of the case study observations, is on program development and the persons who make it happen. Personnel involved in program development at project sites include the project director, the project coordinator, members of the program staff, and others at the site who participate in, influence, or administer the project. Personnel involved in program development from the technical assistance agency include the entire TADS staff, to some degree, and more specifically the technical assistance coordinator who is assigned to the project, and the persons on the TADS staff or contracted by TADS to provide the technical assistance (the technical assistance providers).

For the purpose of this case study, the actual names and the personal and professional characteristics of all persons who participated in technical assistance at the selected case study sites remain confidential. A

list of the participants in the technical assistance, using fictitious names, is provided at the beginning of each case description (see Section IV).

Selection of the Case Study Observers

Reviews of the literature and existing case studies demonstrated the critical importance of the observers to the quality of observations and subsequent development of the case. Such studies suggested that observers are needed who are knowledgeable of organizations and the roles of the people in them, and are sensitive to personal interactions and changes. In addition, observers must be keenly perceptive and able to translate their perceptions into comprehensive, clear, and meaningful descriptions.

For these reasons, TADS contracted with Shirley K. Behr and John R.B. Hawes, Jr. to assist in developing the case study and to conduct the observations. Both case study observers had extensive experience as consultants to developing programs and had directed programs in which they had demonstrated personal and political skills. Their accomplishments suggested a level of competence that would strongly enhance the case study.

The TADS Staff

Developing, directing, and producing the case study were the responsibility of the evaluation staff at TADS, under the direction of Tanya Suarez, Associate Director of TADS for Evaluation. Pat Vandiviere, the

Program Evaluation Specialist, had responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the case study. Much of the planning for the study was conducted by the observers and what was called the "TADS Case Study Staff." This group consisted of Tanya Suarez, Pat Vandiviere, Pat Trohanis (Director of TADS), Tal Black (Associate Director of TADS for Demonstration Projects), and the two technical assistance coordinators (known this year as Bob Mitchell and Carol Turner) who were responsible for the technical assistance to the case study projects. Other meetings and discussions regarding the case study were held with the entire TADS professional staff.

SECTION III

THE CASE STUDY PROCEDURES

This third year of the study was conducted under the "umbrella" framework developed by the observers and the TADS staff during the initial planning for the first year (See Behr, Hawes, Vandiviere, and Suarez, 1981 for a more detailed description of the development of the framework). Four basic questions were developed at that time for investigation:

1. What client characteristics affect technical assistance?

   (e.g., environmental or system characteristics, problems or needs of clients, roles, responsibilities and characteristics of the direct recipients of technical assistance)

2. What technical assistance provider characteristics affect technical assistance?

   (e.g., skills, competencies, roles taken during technical assistance, values/personality characteristics)

3. What characteristics of the technical assistance event(s) themselves influence the technical assistance?

   (e.g., type, consistency, amount and degree of client involvement, degree of personal contact, phase of intervention)

4. What are the outcomes, effects, and/or impacts of technical assistance?

The Year One report focused primarily on the first two questions. A wealth of information about the clients and providers was available after multiple observations of events and many interviews with the TADS staff. The study during the second year focused on the second and third questions, i.e., the technical assistance providers and the technical assistance events themselves, with a special emphasis on the procedures and activities of technical assistance coordination. For the third year the focus of observations and analyses was placed on the last question regarding the outcomes or impacts of technical assistance.

In designing the study to answer these questions, it was decided that the primary audience for the case study was the TADS staff. In addition, a major audience for the completed case study report was to be the TADS funding agency, the Office of Special Education. Other audiences to whom the study was directed included TADS' colleagues at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, the administrators and staff members of the case study projects, and other professionals interested or involved in technical assistance.

Preserving confidentiality was of prime concern. The project sites and staff were disguised, consultants were disguised and were asked to keep the case study aspect of their work confidential, and the projects themselves were asked to preserve confidentiality concerning their participation in the study. TADS staff members were to discuss the case study only with the observers, the consultants, and the project staff.

Provisions were made with TADS, the projects, and the technical assistance providers for the observers to have ready access to all persons, records and activities involved in technical assistance to the projects.

Data to be collected were determined to be, at a minimum, observations, interviews, correspondence, and records of contacts among projects, TADS and TA providers. For all three years of the study direct on-site observations were made of the first technical assistance event, the needs assessment. This was done because the TADS model describes the needs assessment as a very important event in project development and because it is during this process that the specific technical assistance to be provided to a program is identified. On-site observations were then made

of at least one additional technical assistance service. Information regarding the remaining on-site and other types of technical assistance was obtained by observation or follow-up interviews with the project staff and technical assistance providers. Additional information which the observers used to develop their case reports was gathered from reviews of contact logs, correspondence, evaluation forms and end of the year interviews with project staffs and technical assistance coordinators.

The results of the case study were determined by analyzing the case reports using the study questions as guides. Information regarding the case study methodology itself was obtained through interviews with the TADS staff, case study observers, and project staffs.

To enhance the accuracy of the case reports and analyses, the total case study reports were reviewed by the project staffs, case study observers and TADS staff prior to their production. Inaccuracies identified by the reviewers were then corrected and the reports were completed.

The results of the procedures just described are presented here for the third year of the case. In reading the remainder of this report it should be noted that the study questions and philosophical approach taken were designed specifically for the TADS Technical Assistance Case Study project. To be appropriate for case studies of other technical assistance delivery systems, some modifications may be required. Further, it should be remembered that during 1981-82 the study conducted within this framework was limited to technical assistance as it was delivered to two third-year project sites. Descriptions of this third year and subsequent results may not apply to HCEEP projects in their first or second year of

operation. Finally, in reading this and other case study reports, the reader should keep in mind that technical assistance provided to only two projects is described. These descriptions may not reflect technical assistance provided to other projects or developing programs in general.

With these cautions in mind, the reader is invited to review technical assistance as it was provided to Projects "Early Start" and "Co-Op" during their third and final year of funding.

SECTION IV

THE CASES: PROJECT EARLY START AND PROJECT CO-OP

INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of this case study was to meet certain information needs by examining and describing the technical assistance delivery process as it occurs. The case study observers were present as a variety of direct technical assistance services were provided to two projects in different locations during the fiscal year 1981-82. Interactions observed between individuals and within groups during these events were documented carefully. Structured personal interviews with project staff members, consultants, and TADS technical assistance coordinators provided additional information about their perceptions and reactions.

In an effort to describe more clearly the settings, individuals, events, and interactions, a story-telling approach was used to present the observations. This approach invites the reader to develop personal reactions, insights, questions, and conclusions about what took place during the technical assistance events. The stories are based on information documented during multiple observations. The interview responses of project managers and staff, technical assistance providers, and TADS technical assistance coordinators have been integrated into the stories. Fictitious names and places have been used to protect the anonymity of project settings and individuals. The stories are designed to guide the reader through various technical assistance events as they occurred; however, adjustments in other details have been made to create interest and continuity as well as to protect confidentiality.

Two different writing styles may be noted in the reports of the two projects. Each is a function of the observer's personal style, and each has been retained to emphasize the unique set of circumstances and

interactions of individual projects and situations. Although there were many differences between the two case study sites, there were also significant similarities with regard to the technical assistance issues that emerged. They are discussed in Sections V and VI of this report.

CASE #1 - PROJECT EARLY START

Participants

(In order of their appearance in the case description)

Jim	Case Study Observer
Bud Fisher	Project Coordinator (Year One)
Carol Turner	TADS Technical Assistance Coordinator
Harry Newman	Project Coordinator
Helen	Project Nurse
Jeffrey Lewis	Technical Assistance Consultant
Winnifred	Teaching Aide
Ann	Project Social Worker
Rose	Physical Therapist
Cathy	Occupational Therapist
Randy	Head Teacher
Betsy	Speech Pathologist
Jacie	Teaching Aide
Travis Morgan	TADS Staff Member
Pat	Project Teacher
Bill Roland	School Superintendent/Project Director
Susan	Teaching Aide
Leslie Owen	Technical Assistance Consultant
Florence Green	Technical Assistance Consultant
Jesse Davis	Technical Assistance Consultant
Dave Kramer	Technical Assistance Consultant (Year Two)
Norm Linden	Technical Assistance Consultant (Year Two)
George	Needs Assessor (Year One)
Sally	Evaluation Consultant (Year One)
Henry Hobbs	TADS Staff Member (Year One)
Roger	Technical Assistance Consultant (Year One)

Prologue: A Retrospective Review

A continuum of events and changes took place at Project Early Start during its first two years as a demonstration project. Progress was made in the development of programs and services for young handicapped children. Circumstances at the school and within the project itself led to changes in staff, administrative procedures, and program approach. TADS provided a number of technical assistance events and materials designed to meet the needs identified by the project. Jim, in his role as case study observer, was responsible for describing the manner in which these events took place and how they were perceived by the project staff and technical assistance providers. This brief retrospective review is presented here to help provide a chronological perspective for the events that occurred furing the project's third year.

Bud Fisher, coordinator for Project Early Start during its first year, attended an orientation conference for new projects shortly after their grant was awarded. It was there that he had an opportunity to learn about TADS and to meet Carol Turner, the TADS technical assistance coordinator assigned to the project. It was important to Carol that she establish positive and productive relationships with projects, to make certain that they understood TADS' desire to be flexible and helpful. Carol thought Project Early Start had a solid rationale, good program evaluation plan, and potentially effective parent program. She hoped that her professional strengths in the areas of program evaluation, parent education, and cost analysis might prove to be of help to the project.

A TADS consultant conducted an on-site needs assessment at the project

during the early part of the first funding year. Needs were identified in the areas of evaluation, dissemination/demonstration, and staff development planning. TADS consultants provided on-site technical assistance to meet both the evaluation and staff development needs. Bud Fisher attended a small group meeting on dissemination/demonstration conducted by TADS in Chapel Hill. In addition to the TADS publications and newsletters, Carol provided the project with additional technical assistance in the form of printed materials relating to staff development, record keeping, and data collection.

Toward the end of the first year, Bud resigned from Project Early Start to take a job in another state, and Harry Newman, the project speech pathologist, replaced Bud as project coordinator. At about the same time, the teaching staff of the school and most of the project teachers went out on strike. Harry and Helen, the project nurse, were the only individuals to remain on the project staff. The task of hiring and orienting a new staff took all of Harry's time and effort during the first six months of the second funding year. Harry had never met Carol Turner, nor did he have any formal orientation to TADS. He had been reluctant to share the details of the project's problems with Carol, who was concerned about the long delay in scheduling their second-year needs assessment. This was finally accomplished after the first six months of the second year in the form of a self-assessment of needs conducted by Harry.

The staff identified needs in the areas of continuation funding, developing an advisory board, and product development. A TADS consultant provided on-site consultation, on two separate occasions, related to the acquisition of continuation funding and working with the advisory board.

Two TADS consultants provided a review and critique (by mail and telephone) of the parent guide developed by the project. Carol continued in her role as TADS coordinator, and the project continued to receive TADS publications and newsletters throughout the year. At the end of the second year, the project was still uncertain about their plans for obtaining continuation funding. The administrative policies of the school, as well as the limited time available, prevented Harry from following up on most of the continuation funding recommendations made by the TADS consultant.

Carol contacted all of her projects, including Project Early Start, at the very outset of the third year to let them know that TADS would be able to offer either early technical assistance to meet one of the immediate needs of each project or an early on-site third-year needs assessment. After consulting with his staff, Harry called Carol to request early technical assistance to develop strategies for working with the parents of the children served by Project Early Start. Year Three of the case study opens with the planning and implementation of this early technical assistance event, which later became Priority Need #1 for the third year.

The First Technical Assistance Event

The purpose of this first technical assistance event was established during several phone contacts between Carol and Harry. The technical assistance agreement developed for this need stated that helping the project refine its strategies for working with young parents would be the purpose of the event. TADS would provide a consultant for two and one-half days in early September to help project staff analyze their current interactions with parents and make suggestions for developing new strategies. At Carol's suggestion and with Harry's agreement, Jeffrey Lewis was identified as the consultant for this area of technical assistance.

When Carol mailed the preparation materials to Jeffrey, she included a copy of the project's abstract, the technical assistance agreement, and a consultant's evaluation form. Her cover letter provided him with details about how he would be paid and the address and phone number of the project. Carol described the purpose of the case study and introduced Jim as the case study observer. She assured Jeffrey that he was free to call her at TADS if he had any questions about participating in the case study. She requested that he sign a form, enclosed with the letter, that would confirm his agreement to participate in the case study.

Harry also received a letter from Carol with a copy of the technical assistance agreement and an evaluation form to complete following the consultation. Carol's letter also suggested that Harry begin to give some thought to establishing a date for the project's third-year needs assessment. She encouraged Harry to schedule this event prior to the end of the calendar year. Carol reminded him that in addition to using the needs

assessment to identify project needs, it was also an opportunity to give the staff feedback on the accomplishments of the previous year. She pointed out that the needs assessment should not just be something the project does for TADS, but should provide the project with a thorough review and program planning guide. Harry was free to modify the TADS needs assessment procedures to suit his staff's working style. Carol invited Harry to call her if he wished to discuss any ideas about the needs assessment.

The following week, Carol received a letter from Jeffrey Lewis in which he included an updated copy of his resume and confirmed the scheduled dates for technical assistance. He also expressed his feeling that it would be an exciting workshop and he was looking forward to working with the project. All of the necessary arrangements for this first technical assistance event were now complete, and Carol was looking forward to receiving the project's evaluation of how well TADS and the consultant had been able to meet the project's needs.

The First Day

Jim's early arrival at Project Early Start gave him a chance to spend some time with Harry. Jim explained that he had made commitments prior to the scheduling of this technical assistance event which would prevent his observing the second and third days of the consultation. He arranged for a mutually convenient time to call Harry for a follow-up phone conference at the end of the week. Harry appeared to be comfortable with the idea of sharing the highlights of the consultation with Jim. Harry had just returned from a vacation and was looking forward to the

consultation, as well as to a productive third year.

The consultation with Jeffrey Lewis was scheduled to take place in the school library. After being introduced to Jim, Harry, and members of the project staff, Jeffrey proceeded to tell the group how he viewed his role as consultant. He appeared to be warm, poised, efficient, and directive as he explained that his objective was to help the staff work out a problem. He had not come with a preconceived idea of the problem; rather, he asked the staff to tell him about the project and the problems they were experiencing. Jeffrey thought this "get acquainted" time was important, because each person brought their own goals, value systems, and hidden agendas with them.

At Jeffrey's request, each staff member told him something about themselves that had nothing to do with the project. Winnifred, a teaching aide, was sitting next to Jeffrey and therefore was the first to be called upon. She seemed to find it difficult to get started, but she did share the fact that she enjoyed working with kids. Ann, the social worker, said she liked to write poetry, and Jeffrey asked if she had ever had any of her work published. Rose, the physical therapist, described her interest in carpentry, and Jeffrey asked what she had made. Cathy, the occupational therapist, said she was an "old movie buff;" and Helen, the nurse, admitted to a love for food and cooking. Randy, the teacher, said she was interested in ceramics and knitting; while Betsy, the speech pathologist, acknowledged an interest in music and piano. Harry said he liked to read, and Jeffrey inquired into the types of books he liked best. Jackie, another teaching aid, described her interest in sports and dancing. Jeffrey then concluded this get-acquainted exercise by describing briefly his professional

background and sharing the fact that he was also a parent.

Next, Jeffrey asked the staff to tell him about the project -- what they were trying to do and how they defined the project's goals. Ann said she enjoyed working with the parents because helping them to feel better about themselves had a positive effect on the children. Rose said it was her responsibility to provide information to the parents about their children's motor development, and she was rewarded when parents used that information creatively with their children. Although Cathy, the occupational therapist, said she also liked providing information to parents and liked learning from the children, she admitted to moments of depression because some of the children had permanent disabilities. Randy said it was important to treat the children as normally as possible and to encourage the parents to do the same. She admitted that she sometimes became too attached to the children. Helen described the project as unique in its efforts to work with both children and parents. She said the focus of her role was helping the parents, most of whom were very young, assume responsibility for their children. Harry explained that the diversity of problems among the children prevented the project from having the same goals for everyone. He recalled that the project started by serving children, and the parents "came along for the ride." They had since learned that the real long-term impact for the children must be through the family. Jeffrey commented that the staff must be dealing with some pain in relation to the children and their problems.

It was time now to move on to the problem, and Jeffrey commented that he had just heard good things from the staff, and had a good sense of the

children the project served. However, he did not have the same sense about the parents. "It is easy to look at the positives," he said, "but let's look at the less than positive. What would you like to see better?" Harry said they had not yet defined where they wanted the parents to be. In response, Jeffrey stepped to the blackboard and suggested they begin by listing some goals. He called first on Rose, who stated that the parents were not seeking her out for information about their children's motor development. She thought there might be a communication barrier, or perhaps the parents were shy. Cathy said she shared Rose's dilema, and perhaps the information she and Rose were offering was of too technical a nature for the parents to accept it comfortably. Jeffrey turned to the rest of the staff and said, "Help them, group. What really happens?"

Helen was first to respond, saying that the parents don't want to know what's wrong with their children because it's "scary." They want to avoid hearing that their child is handicapped. Harry said the project was not doing a good job of conveying information about the children's handicaps to their parents, and suggested that they had been avoiding this responsibility. Jeffrey said that no one wants to make a negative commitment when there's a possibility that something positive may happen. He suggested that the staff begin thinking about how they would approach this problem, keeping in mind that it involved a whole system of attitudes and values. Harry agreed, and said that the project was structured so that all information to parents was funneled through Helen. Cathy and Rose might feel that the parents were threatened because the parents were not comfortable in relating to other staff members.

A lively and spontaneous discussion took place throughout this goal setting period. Jeffrey remained standing next to the blackboard, responding to statements, questions, and theories from the staff. He invited them to brainstorm by raising questions about what was being said. Assuring them that it was okay to be angry and frustrated with parents, he also cautioned that they needed to learn to understand the parent's feelings. He also suggested that increased contacts with the parents might lead to even greater frustration and anger.

After a short break, Jeffrey suggested they discuss the terms "dependence" and "independence." Jim noted that Jeffrey seemed non-threatening in his approach. He seemed to know just what direction he wanted the discussion to take, but he made certain the staff were ready to proceed at each step. Jeffrey was relaxed, and while he provided good examples to reinforce specific points, he kept his examples relevant and short. As he wrote the words "dependence" and "independence" on the board, Jeffrey asked the staff to suggest other words that meant the same thing. "How many of you," he asked, "feel independent, according to these definitions?" Most of the staff responded, and Jeffrey asked how their responses might be turned into steps for helping parents. As an example, he asked how they thought the parents saw Helen when she said, "Come, let me help you." "Do the parents think she is meddling and intruding with her personal questions?"

The last fifteen minutes of the morning session were devoted to developing a statement about what the staff would like to accomplish with the parents by the end of the year. Things seemed to have moved along smoothly during the morning session, and Jeffrey appeared to be aware of

the time frame of the agenda. Although Harry had offered several spontaneous responses, he seemed to want the staff to have the greater opportunity for interaction. Harry's contributions were appropriate information to clarify how the project was structured or why a certain emphasis was placed on how things were done.

Jeffrey began the afternoon session by asking the staff what expectations they had for parents, and what attitudes parents of handicapped children face, gently probing the staff's responses to encourage more information. Most of the staff participated openly in this discussion, but it seemed to Jim that Cathy and Rose had less to contribute. Jim wondered if they felt more removed from the parents than did other staff members. Harry entered into the discussion with clarifying comments, when he thought the staff were being too general or missing an important point. At the end of the afternoon session, Helen said they had come to realize they needed to change their approach with parents. She attributed this awareness to the project's experience over the past two years and to their growth as a professional staff. Rose suggested that one of their major problems might be related to the fact that most staff members were young and were not yet parents themselves.

Jeffrey concluded the session with a brief discussion about the special types of stress experienced by parents of handicapped children. He planned to conduct a seminar on the development of parenting skills the following afternoon. When the meeting was over, Jim reminded Harry of their appointment for a phone conference later in the week. Once again, he expressed his regret at not being able to observe the technical assistance event in its entirety.

Phone Conference

Jim called Harry at the scheduled time and asked for the highlights of the remaining day and a half of technical assistance. Harry said that the seminar scheduled for the afternoon of the second day did not really occur. Jeffrey handed out charts, listing different theories about parenting skills, but didn't really talk about them. Although none of the staff commented directly, they did try to hint at their disappointment. Harry didn't feel that Jeffrey responded appropriately to the staff's direct requests for more information. Nor had the third day's "summing up" session gone as planned; instead, it was a staff discussion on improving communications with parents. Jeffrey led the staff in some role playing; and although they did discuss how to improve parent participation at the very end of the session, the discussion was not conducted at any depth.

Harry said the staff was very dissatisfied, and some of them were not talking to each other by the last day of the technical assistance event. He said it was an awkward situation because Jeffrey appeared to place more value on the opinions of some staff members than others, choosing to focus more on staff who were not directly involved in the parent program. For example, he seemed to place more value on the opinions of some of the teaching aides than on Helen's opinions. Harry suggested that Jeffrey might not have been aware of the group's dynamics, or, if that were not the case, perhaps he basically disagreed with the program's philosophy and wanted to show the staff they were headed in the wrong direction.

When Jim asked Harry to describe the positive outcomes of the event, Harry reported that the consultation provided an opportunity for staff to

communicate as a group. They did some good talking after the consultation, although sharing their feelings did not serve to bring them closer together. Harry thought he had not made the project's needs clear to Carol or to Jeffrey. During his phone conversations with Carol, Harry had specifically requested a presentation on parenting skills, but he did not have the time to carefully read the technical assistance agreement that Carol had sent him prior to the consultation. Had he done so, he would have called Carol and requested a change. However, Harry's phone conversation with Jeffrey to establish the consultation dates had led Harry to feel confident that Jeffrey had an appropriate understanding of the project's needs.

Next, Jim asked Harry if he thought Jeffrey had been well prepared by TADS for the consultation. Harry did not think so, for several reasons. When he talked with Jeffrey to confirm the dates, Jeffrey had not yet received any background information about the project from TADS. In terms of what the project wanted, Harry thought there had been a communication breakdown between himself and Carol. He did not believe Jeffrey knew a great deal about parents or handicapped children, nor did Jeffrey seem to be aware of the dynamics and interactions of the group during the technical assistance event.

Jim asked Harry if, in Harry's opinion, the project and consultant had been suitably matched. Harry responded that they were not and based his opinion on the belief that Carol had not really understood what Harry wanted and the project had not received what the technical assistance agreement promised. Jeffrey had not seemed to appreciate the fact that the project operated under an expressed philosophy, nor did he seem to

understand the project's limits. Jeffrey had suggested that the project change its expectations for the parents, a suggestion that led many of the staff to question the validity of the project's philosophy. All of this had served to make Helen's and Ann's responsibilities for working with the parents more difficult.

Several members of the staff, including Harry, felt they had been manipulated by the consultant. They had lost much of the gains they had previously made in working as a group. The teaching staff was confused, and they wondered why they had received technical assistance at all. Helen and Ann were angry, which was another bad experience with TADS for Helen. Harry was not as angry as Ann and Helen, but he was feeling responsible for not having done a good job in explaining the project's needs. In retrospect, Harry thought he should have intervened during the consultation when he saw that things were not going well. Instead, he had chosen to be polite. Harry's general feeling with regard to this technical assitance event was disappointment.

Follow-up

After his conversation with Harry, Jim regretted even more that he had not been present to observe the final days of the technical assistance event. He decided to call Jeffrey Lewis, hoping that Jeffrey would be able to shed more light on the events and problems described by Harry.

Jim asked Jeffrey what information he had received about Project Early Start prior to the consultation, and whether this information had been helpful in preparing for his visit. Jeffrey said he had received both formal and informal information. He had a lengthy phone conversation with Carol when she called to ask him to serve as consultant. He

had then received written information from Carol, including the project's abstract and the technical assistance agreement. He believed he had received enough information to prepare him for the consultation; although he would not have wanted any more information, he would not have wanted any less.

Jeffrey said he had combined the information he received from Carol with his own previous experience to provide the basis for his understanding of the project's needs. His understanding was that they needed more knowledge about parenting skills and sensitivity to the problems of being the young parent of a handicapped child. He also thought there was a need for staff to find ways of helping the parents become more accepting of the program, and perceived that the project was finding resistance among some of the parents.

During the consultation, Jeffrey had perceived some additional needs. He thought the staff needed to be able to look at themselves, which turned out to be a greater need than he had anticipated. There was also a need to move toward more acceptance by the parents of what the staff were trying to do for the children. Jeffrey did not think the seminar was particularly useful. He had found it difficult to maintain staff attention, although he tried to make the session more interesting by describing recent research findings.

When Jim asked Jeffrey to evaluate the technical assistance event, Jeffrey said there were several positive outcomes. The therapists, Rose and Cathy, were able to see difficulties in how they presented information to the parents. The role-playing exercise and the staff's verbal feedback had been helpful in this regard. The fact that the entire staff had

met together provided an opportunity for the teaching aides to speak up and for the first time to share their insights about the parents. However, Jeffrey had become aware that something else was happening toward the end. The staff were having difficulty interacting, but had not discussed this difficulty openly. Jeffrey sensed some anger, and would have dealt with it if it had been expressed openly. It was as though something had happened along the way that he had been excluded from knowing about. There had been some comments from the staff that the "real" problems were not coming out, and he thought the staff were not really ready to look at themselves and were not being honest.

In retrospect, Jeffrey thought it would have been better to do some processing with the group first, and to spread the consultation over a longer period of time in order to give the staff a chance to work things out. He thought he and the project had been a "good" match, but not an "excellent" one. Finally, he speculated about whether the fact that he was a psychologist might have been threatening to the project staff.

Interlude

Two weeks later, Carol received Harry's evaluation of Jeffrey Lewis' consultation. She was more than a little surprised at the below-average ratings and negative comments Harry made about the technical assistance event. Harry described Jeffrey's presentation as disorganized, and commented on the consultant's failure to address the project's informational needs. Harry would not recommend that Jeffrey be asked to work with other projects because he was not well organized and did not seem knowledgeable about handicapped children. In addition, Harry noted that

Jeffrey did not seem to have much knowledge about group process and was judgmental at times. The consultant had failed to include all of the staff in the discussions and had laughed at certain staff members during the role-playing situations. The only major accomplishment that Harry listed was that there had been plenty of opportunity for staff discussion. Harry indicated that the project still needed technical assistance in the area that was to have been addressed by Jeffrey Lewis' consultation.

Carol called Harry to discuss how TADS could follow up on this situation. Harry repeated his written comments that Jeffrey had not addressed their stated needs. He had used encounter-group and role-playing techniques to deal with their needs, when what they had wanted was information and facts. Harry was not sure about follow-up, and Carol suggested some printed materials that might be helpful. She also promised to investigate some specific resources.

Next, Carol requested a meeting with the Associate Director for Demonstration Projects and other TADS staff members to discuss Project Early Start. She was frankly discouraged by what seemed to be ongoing negative feedback from the project. The TADS staff decided that TADS would offer to pay Harry's expenses for a trip to Chapel Hill after the project completed the first two sections of their needs assessment. This visit would allow TADS to assist Harry in clarifying the project's needs and to work with him in developing the technical assistance agreement. Carol concurred with this decision, thinking it might be a way to improve upon the poor communications she seemed to be having with this project.

Carol called Harry to suggest this approach, and Harry said it sounded like a good idea but he would have to give it some thought. While this discussion was still fresh in her mind, Carol dictated a letter to Harry. The purpose of the letter was to confirm the dates set by the project for their needs assessment and to forward the necessary materials and forms relating to the needs assessment. Carol also strongly encouraged Harry to adapt the needs assessment procedures to serve as a program review, which she thought would be of most benefit to the project's operation. Finally, Carol reviewed in her letter the highlights of her recent phone conversation with Harry, again recommending that Harry come to TADS for a one-day session to develop the technical assistance agreements and to discuss plans for addressing the areas of need that would not be met by TADS technical assistance. Finally, she commented that this approach might help to eliminate their past problems of communication about the project's true needs.

Harry responded to Carol's letter within a week, suggesting a modification of the proposed trip to Chapel Hill. He explained he would prefer to arrange a telephone consultation with Carol to discuss the results of the program review. He thought it was important for the staff to have an opportunity to work out the technical assistance agreements as a group. Harry thought the project was not at a point where they were able to define their needs clearly. He also commented on the communication problem which Carol had mentioned in her letter. He said he thought communication had been a problem only in the case of Jeffrey Lewis' consultation, which was the only time the project had not presented their needs to TADS in written form. Harry reminded Carol that many of their past conversations

had taken place under time pressures; a scheduled phone conference would give them an opportunity for a thorough discussion of technical assistance. If Carol did not agree with his suggestion, Harry said, he would be willing to arrange his schedule to include a visit to TADS. As he concluded the telephone conversation, Harry thanked Carol for her efforts at making the technical assistance process more useful and relevant. After the phone call, Carol discussed Harry's suggestion with Travis Morgan. Carol and Travis agreed that Harry's option sounded reasonable, and Carol called Harry to arrange for the phone conference which would follow the project's program review. She and Harry also discussed the possibility of scheduling some time to meet at the project directors' meeting when that event took place.

Meanwhile, Carol received a copy of Jeffrey Lewis' completed consultant's evaluation form. Jeffrey had already shared most of his thoughts with Jim during their phone conversation. On the evaluation form he listed several major accomplishments of his consultation with Project Early Start, including comments by some of the participants that they now felt they were able to understand their impact on other people, and that the consultation had brought staff together and allowed an interchange among staff who had not previously had this opportunity. Jeffrey attributed the difficulties that arose during the consultation to issues among staff which had not been aired in the group.

The Needs Assessment

Day One

The entire staff, with the exception of Betsy and Cathy, had gathered in the school library on a lovely day in late October when Jim arrived to observe the Project Early Start needs assessment. Jim was glad he had recently visited the project and was already up to date on changes in staff and programs. He noted, as he sat down at the library table, that each staff member had a packet of needs assessment materials. Harry began the first session by describing the purpose of the needs assessment and the functions of TADS, noting that the project does not pay for TADS' services. Next, Harry led a general discussion about the project, using the components listed in the Needs Assessment Profile as a guide. Pat, one of the project teachers, explained the purpose of the project's services to children, and Ann described the purpose of the parent program. From time to time, Harry asked the staff to describe how they accomplished certain goals with the children and parents. He asked what the staff thought the third year's needs assessment should focus on, and Helen said they needed to help the children's families obtain resources and information. Ann said there was still work to be done with the young parents and a need to change the format of the parent group.

Harry asked the staff to describe the purpose of staff development, and Pat suggested it was "generalizing staff knowledge." Harry next reviewed some of the previous staff development activities and asked if there were other staff development needs. After a rather lengthy silence, Helen responded that they needed to know more about the handicapping

conditions of children in order to work with the children more effectively as they grew and changed. Harry commented on the staff's diverse backgrounds as an added need to share more information. He went on to define the Demonstration/Dissemination/Continuation components of the needs assessment, and asked the staff what parts of the project they thought should be stressed in Demonstration. Pat and Ann responded to this question with some general ideas.

While discussing the Continuation component, Harry reported on his recent meeting with Bill Roland, the school superintendent and project director. Harry was partially encouraged by Bill's firm verbal commitment to continuing the project with Medicaid funding. Bill said the school would take legal appeal action if Medicaid funding were denied. Helen commented that such an action probably would be a protracted one, perhaps taking as much as five years. Harry said he expected to know the status of continuation funding after the first of the year, and he did not encourage further discussion of this issue.

Next, Harry invited the staff to comment on how the technical assistance objectives should be stated. Ann suggested there was a need to define the competencies they expected the parents to achieve. Pat asked if they were able to refer parents to other counseling resources, and Harry said they should be very cautious in this regard. Such referrals should be at the parents' request, and staff should remember that they were privy to extremely personal information about the parents. Ann mentioned a need for parent participation in following through on referrals made for the children. Harry suggested they might do a task analysis of what parents needed to do to have their children placed in appropriate programs.

In discussing the project's advisory board, Harry reported on the poor response he was getting in his efforts to arrange a meeting of the board. Only two members had attended the June meeting, although all of the members had indicated they planned to attend. Harry said all of the members were interested in the board and the project, but few could come to the meetings. He hoped the November meeting would be an impetus to get new members. Next, Harry briefly described the technical assistance relating to the advisory board that TADS had provided last year. Unfortunately, he said, it was still difficult to get people involved because the members had lost interest as a result of their not being used effectively at the very beginning of the project. Harry told the staff they were welcome to attend advisory board meetings, and he would welcome their ideas or suggestions on this topic.

Before the group took a short break, Harry redirected their attention to the Continuation objective. He said he was also uncertain about obtaining United Way support. According to Bill Roland, United Way did not agree that there was a need for project services to parents. Bill and his board of directors did not want Harry to apply for private foundation funding, and Harry admitted to the staff that he did not understand all of the "politics" involved with this issue.

After the break, Harry reviewed with the staff the Needs Assessment Profile, reading each statement from the profile and asking the staff to respond. The Services to Children component was the first to be addressed, and specific examples of children and situations were used to describe the status of the items under discussion. Most of the staff seemed

to agree that there was a need for technical assistance in developing contingency plans for the children which would be important if the project did not receive continuation funds. Harry reviewed the changes suggested for this component, and asked the staff to identify who would assume responsibility for the items that needed further work.

During their discussion of Services to Parents, there was some confusion about what a "direct" service meant, as used in the needs assessment instrument. Although Harry offered to call Carol Turner for examples and clarification, the staff decided that such a call was not necessary. Harry took the lead in their discussion, suggesting the need for the project to establish specific competencies for parents.

Although their agenda had provided two hours for completion of the Services to Children and Services to Parents components of the needs assessment, Harry noted they had completed those tasks in just one hour. Therefore, he suggested that they begin to work on some of the sections which had been scheduled for the afternoon session. After a short break, they discussed the Staff Development component. Harry asked the staff to help him determine what the new staff members needed to know, particularly because staff members are hired at different times during the year. The group completed their review of the Staff Development component in ten minutes.

Demonstration/Dissemination/Continuation was the next item to be reviewed. Harry explained that visitors to the project are asked to fill out forms, and he assumes responsibility for keeping records on this activity. However, there did not seem to be a suitable mechanism for

sharing the visitors' comments with the entire staff. With reference to Dissemination, Harry reported that the school's board of directors did not want the school to receive publicity. They did not think it was necessary for others to know what they were doing as long as they themselves knew they were doing a good job. Harry therefore cautioned the staff to be careful in their development of any plans for Dissemination. The staff recessed for lunch after they completed their fifteen-minute review of the Dissemination component.

The afternoon session began with a summary and review of the morning session, followed by the task of selecting the needs to be addressed through technical assistance. Harry told the staff that Carol Turner was the technical assistance coordinator assigned to their project, and when he talked about TADS he was usually referring to Carol. He also gave a brief description of the types of technical assistance available from TADS.

The staff agreed that they needed to develop some method of measuring parents' satisfaction. Ann suggested they seek information from other projects rather than "re-invent the wheel." Harry said he would discuss this subject when he talked with Carol by phone at the end of the day. He did not believe the project was providing parents with adequate opportunities to give honest feedback, and it was important that the parents know it was okay not to like everything about the project.

Harry then suggested that there was a need for technical assistance in organizing presentations for the community, because the staff were very busy and outside help would assist them in pulling together a format and some timelines. He explained the purpose of demonstration projects

and cautioned that unless they had good information, they should not give presentations about their projects. Ann raised the issue of uncertainty of continuation funding, suggesting that the project should develop a presentation that could stand on its own, such as printed hand-outs. Harry asked the group if they thought technical assistance was needed for this activity. Susan said she thought it was, but Helen asked the group, "How much expertise do we have among us?" It seemed to Jim that Helen was politely negating a need for technical assistance. However, Harry reminded the staff that there was too little time for a trial-and-error approach.

The remainder of the afternoon session was spent in assigning priorities to their needs for technical assistance and discussing the resources available from TADS. The staff seemed to be interested and involved in this discussion. The agenda for the first day was completed on time, and Harry said he would call Carol Turner to review the needs they had identified. He reminded the staff they would meet again the next morning to develop their tentative technical assistance agreements.

Day Two

Jim and Harry met early the next morning so that Harry could tell Jim about his telephone conference with Carol and talk about the highlights of the previous day's activities. Harry's half-hour conversation with Carol gave him a chance to review the progress they had made aa well as to discuss the overall needs identified by the staff. Carol did not seem to think TADS would have any problems helping the project to meet those needs. Harry told Jim he thought things had gone well in yesterday's sessions, much as he had anticipated they would. He thought the staff seemed a little more formal than usual, perhaps because an observer was present.

Although Harry did not think the staff had left their opinions unexpressed, he believed they had been more careful than usual in their choice of words.

When the staff arrived, Harry distributed copies of the technical assistance agreement worksheets. He reviewed the areas they had chosen for technical assistance (developing a way to measure parent satisfaction, developing a guide for parent training, and developing a presentation for dissemination), and reported on his phone conversation with Carol. Helen asked if the project's needs were within the scope of TADS' work, and Harry said they were.

Their next task, Harry explained, was to set priorities for their technical assistance needs and to include, for internal purposes, their own non-technical assistance needs. After the staff had the chance to offer suggestions, Harry asked if anyone had strong feelings about what their current top priority for technical assistance should be. Helen said she thought that developing a way to measure parent satisfaction was most important. Harry explained that inasmuch as TADS would be able to meet all three of their identified needs, it might be more efficient to use their time working on the technical assistance agreements. He also reminded the staff that the early technical assistance from Jeffrey Lewis had been designated as their first priority need for the year.

The group spent the next forty-five minutes discussing their non-technical assistance needs. These were defined as being in the areas of: developing a case finding plan, developing a contingency plan for referring children to other programs, developing a policy on family involvement, and developing a staff orientation policy. Most of the staff took part in

this discussion, and Harry made an effort to solicit their opinions. At one point, he expressed concern about starting tasks they would not have time to complete. Following further staff discussion, Harry presented the idea that interested members of the staff volunteer to work on specific areas of their non-technical assistance needs. By this time, it was noon. The staff had not yet begun to work on the technical assistance agreements, and they agreed to tackle that job after lunch.

The afternoon was spent working on the technical assistance agreements. The group established the following needs and types of technical assistance required to meet the needs:

Need 2: Develop a service assessment instrument for use by parents, with technical assistance provided through information services and review and critique

Need 3: Develop a parent curriculum, with technical assistance provided through review and critique

Need 4: Develop an information presentation for community groups, with technical assistance provided through on-site consultation

Interlude

The technical assistance agreement for Project Early Start was ratified the day after Carol Turner received the needs assessment materials from Harry. Carol made a note to suggest to Harry that the project alter the #4 need if they did not receive continuation funding. In that case, she would recommend that they substitute technical assistance to help the project close in an orderly fashion.

Harry's evaluation of the needs assessment rated most items as "average." He commented that his past experience in conducting a self-assessment had made a positive difference in using this needs assessment

more effectively. He also thought the process might have been more useful if they had discussed the components over a greater time span, such as one component per day. They had considered doing this, but decided it was impractical because of the need to have the observer present and some of the staff's difficulty in adjusting their schedules.

Several days later Carol called Harry to tell him about a seminar that was to be held, on community services for handicapped children, near their project. Harry was not available when Carol called, so she gave the information to Helen. Carol also described the seminar in a cover letter to Harry which she sent with the final typed technical assistance agreement. She promised to call Harry with the exact dates of the seminar when they were announced. Carol included a "TADScript" in her letter, which described a number of instruments available that were designed to gather information from parents. She asked Harry to read these descriptions and decide which instruments he would like Carol to send him for further review. Carol's letter concluded with a reminder that the technical assistance agreements were only working documents that could be changed at Harry's request.

Several weeks later, Carol called Harry to arrange to meet with him at the project directors' meeting which was scheduled for the middle of that month. The two had a brief and pleasant visit at the meeting, and Harry gave Carol a list of the parent information instruments he wanted to review further. Carol mailed the instruments as soon as she returned to Chapel Hill. In her accompanying letter, Carol reminded Harry of the

timeline for completing the first draft of the Parent Reaction to Services instrument, assuring him it was possible to extend the timeline if additional time were needed. When Harry received Carol's letter and the promised materials, he responded with a note of thanks for her concern and interest.

Harry called to request a two-week extension for completing the parent assessment of services instrument. Several weeks later, Carol called the project to give Harry the dates for the seminar on handicapped children and Harry said someone from the project staff would attend. Carol told Harry to remember that he had the option of requesting a change in the technical assistance agreements if the needs of the project were to change. Within the next few days, Harry did just that when he called to ask Carol to cancel the #4 need, "Developing an Information Presentation for Community Groups." He said they might replace this need with another at a later date.

When Carol received the project's draft of the parent assessment of satisfaction instrument, she called Harry to discuss the selection of the consultants who would conduct the review and critique. Leslie Owen, an evaluation specialist, and Florence Green, who had consulted with the project the previous year, were the two consultants recommended by TADS' evaluation specialist to conduct this technical assistance event. Harry approved TADS' selection, and Carol contacted both consultants to confirm their participation. She sent the necessary materials to Leslie and Florence, including copies of the Parent Satisfaction Scale, the parent assessment instrument developed by the project, and the project's abstract. In her cover letter, she provided both consultants with information about the case study and asked them to sign an enclosed form to

confirm their agreement to participate. She also encouraged Leslie and Florence to call Harry if they had any questions or comments about the proposed consultation. Her letter also reviewed the procedures to follow for being reimbursed for their services. Carol requested that Leslie primarily provide a critique of the instrument from an evaluator's point of view and that Florence direct her review to content analysis.

Review and Critique of Parent Assessment Instrument

Florence Green

Florence Green was comfortable in conducting the review for the project, and she appreciated their desire to obtain feedback from the parents. In addition to her completed review, Florence sent Harry a copy of a similar instrument developed at her project, including all of the parents' responses. Both her review and her cover letter were extremely encouraging about the potential impact of the instrument developed by Project Early Start. She offered concrete suggestions about the language used in the instrument, the organization of its contents, and its rationale and format, as well as recommending expansion and the deletion of certain areas. Florence concluded by stating that she had enjoyed providing the technical assistance and would be happy to answer questions or clarify her suggested changes and recommendations.

Leslie Owen

A brief memo to Harry was attached to Leslie's critique of the instrument. The memo explained that Leslie's comments were organized into sections that were consistent with the project's review needs. She hoped her comments would be useful, and encouraged Harry to call her if he had any questions. The critique itself covered the five areas of content, organization, clarity, appropriateness, and format. Leslie made several suggestions for changes to all of the areas except clarity.

Interlude

Carol Turner was pleased to receive Harry's positive evaluations

of the technical assistance provided by Florence and Leslie. In his report, Harry rated Leslie's consultation as "excellent" in all areas. He commented that her recommendations were well organized, specific, and easy to understand. Her critique was well prepared and answered the project's questions. Harry also rated Florence's review as "excellent" in all areas. He thought it had addressed the areas requested by the project, and had provided them with useful information and suggestions.

When Carol later received Harry's evaluation of the information service technical assistance she had provided, she found that Harry had rated her assistance as "good." He commented that her help in developing documentation methods for the Parent Satisfaction Scale through information services had resulted in the development of their parent assessment instrument.

At the end of March, Harry called Carol to request officially that TADS cancel the two technical assistance agreements for the project's #3 and #4 needs. Instead, he requested an on-site consultation to help the project develop program strategies for serving young children with autistic-like behaviors. The project was receiving an increasing number of referrals of children with such problems, and the staff needed to increase their knowledge and skills in this area. Carol therefore developed a new technical assistance agreement to meet this new need, for which TADS would provide two days of on-site consultation. Harry completed the TADS preparation form for on-site consultation, which gave him the opportunity to specify the tasks expected of the consultant. He was also able to describe the kinds of expertise and professional base he preferred the

consultant to have. Finally, he requested that this technical assistance event take place around the middle of May.

On-Site Consultation: Staff Training in Autism and Behavior Management

This technical assistance event occurred in May at a time when the case study observer was unable to visit Project Early Start. Jim called Harry Newman the following week to ask about the consultation and its effectiveness.

Harry reported that the activity had been successful in meeting the project's needs. Because Project Early Start was receiving an increasing number of referrals of young children with behavior problems, a need for further information about behavior management and autism had been identified. The consultant, Jesse Davis, was very knowledgeable, very well prepared, and very concerned about meeting the staff's needs. Jesse had offered good practical suggestions and had a nice way of interacting with the staff.

Harry believed that the information provided from the consultation would be useful in program planning. Although most of the direct-care staff involved in the training activity would be leaving the project at the end of the school year, the knowledge would be useful to them in other settings. Harry also believed he would be better able to guide new staff in setting up appropriate programs as a result of this consultation.

Final Case Study Interviews

Harry Newman

Jim called Harry Newman late in April to schedule a time for the final case study interview. Because the interview would cover all three years of technical assistance and require several hours of uninterrupted time, Jim suggested that they meet at some other place than the project site. He was aware of how difficult it might be for Harry to concentrate in the midst of his ever present responsibilities. Harry welcomed Jim's suggestion, and they agreed on a date for meeting at a quiet restaurant where they could lunch as they talked. After their phone conversation, Jim mailed Harry a copy of the guide that had been developed by TADS and the case study consultants for the final interview. It described the key issues involved in the technical assistance provided by TADS over the three-year period. He hoped that having this guide well in advance of the interview would allow Harry to spend some time in careful thought about the issues, and perhaps even to discuss them with the project staff.

When Jim arrived at the restaurant where Harry was waiting for him, he suddenly realized how much he had been looking forward to this opportunity to hear Harry's perceptions of technical assistance. The major purpose of the interview was to bring closure to the case study, and from Jim's point of view, it would help to clarify many of the observations he had made throughout the three years. Harry said he had given considerable thought to the guide, and he thought he was well prepared to discuss the issues. (In order to simulate the actual interview, Jim's questions and

Harry's responses are presented here in dialogue form.)

Jim: Were there any characteristics of your project itself or your staff that contributed to the success of the technical assistance you received?

Harry: Staff enthusiasm. The staff was eager to learn and to improve their ability to provide services. The project was open to new ideas and methods. For example, they incorporated many of the consultants' suggestions from the reviews and critiques, and I tried to incorporate the suggestions for the advisory board. The project functions as a team, and all of the staff participated in identifying our needs and in receiving job-related technical assistance.

Jim: Were there any characteristics that limited the success of technical assistance?

Harry: The tremendous staff turnover after the first year, and the nature of the turnover, didn't allow for orienting the staff to technical assistance or to TADS. The basic uncertainty of the future of the project during the third year had a negative effect. It took TADS and the project a long time to become comfortable with the administrative structure of the school, expecially due to the dramatic changes that took place after the first year.

Jim: Do you think that the degree of authority you had to make decisions and exercise control over the project had any effect on technical assistance?

Harry: Yes. It was easier for me than it was for Bud Fisher. Bill Roland gave me free rein in decision-making for the project. The fact that

I was able to make those decisions accounted for the project's willingness to participate in technical assistance.

Jim: What effect, if any, did your leadership style have on technical assistance?

Harry: It provided for maximum staff input in defining the technical assistance needs of the project.

Jim: Did your expectations for technical assistance have any effect on technical assistance?

Harry: Yes. Initially, the staff and I had low expectations due to our lack of orientation and Bill's negative feelings about technical assistance. The way I handled the second-year needs assessment was affected by this low expectation -- I just wanted to get it over with. The project just wasn't ready. My expectations for technical assistance were raised after Dave Kramer's consultation which, in comparison, made Jeffrey Lewis' consultation this summer even more of a disappointment. However, low expectations did not negatively affect the good consultation events -- Dave Kramer was a good example of that. After Jeffrey's consultation, the staff was reluctant to have another on-site consultant. He was their first experience with technical assistance, but my second. The staff tended to stick to "safe" areas during the third-year needs assessment, preferring review and critique to on-site consultation.

Jim: Did the experience and training of your staff have any effect on technical assistance?

Harry: Yes, mostly during the second-year needs assessment. They were new to their jobs and to the project. They thought there was something wrong with admitting they needed help and, therefore, that needs assessment was less revealing about our needs. The newness of the staff to the

project prevented them from knowing what their needs were, and there was a general lack of confidence among the staff.

Jim: Did the amount of time the staff had to participate have an effect on technical assistance?

Harry: It had a positive effect, in that the staff did have the time and it allowed people to be involved. Everyone got the same information at the same time. It allowed them to concentrate on the technical assistance event. They took time as individuals to read material, and as a group to discuss things during our regular meeting times.

Jim: What characteristics of the consultants affected technical assistance?

Harry: Let's start with Dave Kramer. He was direct, had the information the project needed, was enthusiastic, seemed non-judgmental, was sensitive to the immediate needs, and was able to adjust to meet the needs. He had good follow-up and was easy to talk to, because he was a good listner. He took time to learn more about the project during the technical assistance event itself, in addition to preparing in advance. He took personalities into account before providing solutions.

Jeffrey Lewis was not effective. He did not provide what was asked for and did not seem interested in what the project thought was needed. He was very judgmental and was not sensitive to what was happening in the group. He did not seem interested in what the project was doing. He came with preconceived ideas and stuck with them, even though they may have been inaccurate.

Florence Green was knowledgeable, supportive, thorough, and quick to respond. The fact that she sent additional information was evidence of

her interest.

Norm Linden, who critiqued for us last year, was also knowledgeable, but he didn't seem to have a good understanding of our purpose in doing the parent activity guide. He did seem concerned and interested in getting feedback from the project.

Leslie Owen was knowledgeable and supportive. She seemed interested in meeting the project's needs.

Jesse Davis was an outstanding consultant. Jesse's fund of useful knowledge and concern about meeting staff needs were evident in all phases of the consultation.

Jim: Did the consultants' knowledge of the project and preparation efforts have an effect on technical assistance? What about their knowledge of TADS and HCEEP?

Harry: Yes, it made a big difference. It goes along with being open and being able to realize that they can't get it all from written material. Knowledge of TADS and HCEEP is important if it is tied into the project's involvement with TADS and HCEEP, but this doesn't seem as important as other characteristics.

Jim: What characteristics of the technical assistance coordinator (Carol Turner) affected technical assistance?

Harry: Carol's concern was initially interpreted as pressure, and it took a while to establish a comfortable and effective working relationship. Carol initially made incorrect assumptions about what the project knew, but she is responsive, knowledgeable, interested, and concerned. She made a real effort to provide what the project needed and was effective in providing factual information. Harry and Carol had eventually developed a

good system of working together and the project now has a good feeling about the potential benefits of technical assistance.

Jim: What effect did Carol's personal availability and responsiveness to your requests have on technical assistance?

Harry: It was beneficial. She took the time to talk through some of the problems, such as those arising from the consultation of Jeffrey Lewis. Carol seemed to make even more certain after that experience that she really understood our needs.

Jim: What effect did Carol's interpersonal skills have on technical assistance?

Harry: Initially they were of concern, and felt like pressure. This had a negative effect on the second-year needs assessment. Carol and I have developed a better communication system since then. I used to find her contacts intrusive, and she seemed to be judgmental. I now find her flexible and I know she really makes an effort.

Jim: Did Carol's ability to be flexible, as well as her knowledge of the project, have any effect on technical assistance?

Harry: The second-year needs assessment was done late, and Carol was able to accommodate the project's timeliness. She was also able to accommodate late changes in our third-year needs. Her knowledge of the project during this third year has been helpful and has enabled me to make better decisions with her about our technical assistance needs.

Jim: Were there any factors related to preparation and planning that affected technical assistance?

Harry: Part of the limitations of Jeffrey Lewis' consultation was that the project did not clearly define the needs and the expected outcomes.

Jim: What about the consultants?

Harry: It is helpful for consultants to have background information on a

project, so long as they get more information when they arrive on the site. It's important for the consultants to know the material they intend to present and to know the goals of the consultation.

Jim: And TADS?

Harry: TADS and the project need to prepare together for the consultation. TADS needs to prepare the project for the consultant, and the consultant for the project. It is important for the TADS coordinator to match up consultants with projects. Jeffrey Lewis had a different philosophic base from that of our project. Had we filled out an on-site consultation preparation form, this might have come up. It is important for a project to give thought to the philosophic base they want their consultants to have.

Jim: Did the scheduling of technical assistance have any effect?

Harry: Yes. Not having sufficient preparation time, or doing the needs assessment at a time when the project isn't ready are limitations. Also, you need to be sure there is enough time to implement recommendations that result from the technical assistance. TADS' assumption that all projects follow the same evolutionary process is incorrect. I didn't know at first that TADS could be flexible. Technical assistance would be more effective if the events fit into the project's time needs rather than into a pre-set schedule.

Jim: What effect does communication have on technical assistance?

Harry: When a project lets the TADS coordinator know what their needs are, it enhances communication and the coordinator's ability to let the consultants know the project's needs. A breakdown in this communication process limits the effectiveness of technical assistance because the consultant will not address the needs. Most of the consultants came with their major

share of information from Carol. The information they had was not always accurate. For example, Dave Kramer came thinking that the advisory board was a major need, when continuation funding was really the major need. Dave's open communication style allowed us to clear up this misunderstanding right at the beginning.

Jim: How well were your needs identified?

Harry: They could have been identified better. Had we not been observed for the case study, we might have asked for more on-site technical assistance.

Jim: To what extent were your needs met?

Harry: They were mostly met. When they weren't, it was because they were not accurately identified or communicated.

Jim: What factors promoted or limited the progress in meeting your needs?

Harry: The limiting factors were the amount of available time to spend on the technical assistance event and to follow through on recommendations. An open-minded staff promoted progress in meeting our needs, as for example, with the recommended changes in the reviews and critiques.

Jim: Were there any benefits to being a case study site?

Harry: Yes. It provided an opportunity to talk about technical assistance and TADS with someone other than the people directly involved. It allowed me to give things more thought, and I had an increased awareness. There was a benefit in looking at technical assistance events through the eyes of an impartial observer, and in receiving information from the "learnings" of the case study.

Jim: Were there any problems with being a case study site?

Harry: We felt under scrutiny, and it was not always a natural situation. I think it affected Carol and may have accounted for some of her "pushing" for us to meet deadlines.

Jim: Were there any problems with confidentiality?

Harry: None. The process protected that, and our recommended changes were honored.

Jim: Was I a resource for you in any way?

Harry: Yes. I got my orientation to TADS through you, and being able to talk through problems was helpful.

Jim: Did you use the case study reports in any way?

Harry: Yes. I used the first-year case as a guide for what to expect of the needs assessment, and to find out what had happened. I used the outcomes to learn what to avoid, as well as to understand the positive aspects such as getting the staff involved in technical assistance. The second year served as a type of diary, and it helped me to look at the process the project went through.

Jim: What recommendations would you make to others who might want to participate in a case study?

Harry: It is important to recognize that being a case study site is going to have some effect. Once recognized, you might be able to deal more effectively with being observed. This affects the technical assistance recipients, providers, and coordinators. It is also important for the participants to understand the purpose of the case study -- ongoing discussion is necessary. It is hard to pretend you are not being observed; it creates an unnatural setting. It is also important for the case study observer to have ongoing follow-up with the project, before and after technical assistance events, because projects and people change, and

awareness of those changes is important. It might be helpful to have an example of a case study to read, so that people know what to expect. Then they would know that it was fair and objective.

Jim: Did your project have any spin-offs attributable to technical assistance?

Harry: None that I can think of.

This last question completed the final interview, and Jim asked Harry to bring him up to date on the project's future. Harry said that the project is expected to be continued with Medicaid as the primary source of funding. However, Medicaid will not cover the full cost of the project, and the hope was that some United Way funding could make up the difference between the current Medicaid rate and actual project costs.

Some reductions in project services will be necessary; one hour less of programming will be offered per day; all full-tim positions, including Harry's, will be reduced from 40 to 30 hours per week; children under 12 months of age will be served at home one time per week; one parent seminar workshop will be scheduled per month, with parents participating in the classroom one time per month, which will result in a significant reduction in parent services.

The philosophy and primary goals of the project will remain the same, Harry said. There will be a change in emphasis from focusing on the needs of very young parents to include the needs of parents of all ages. Harry was confident that this change would not be detrimental because the staff were now knowledgeable about other resources available to parents that could not be met by the project.

Carol Turner

Jim had also contacted Carol Turner to arrange for a convenient time to conduct the final case study interview, but their mutually busy schedules and financial concerns with the case study budget prevented their meeting. They arranged instead for a telephone conference. In the meantime, Jim sent Carol a copy of the guide for the final interview and asked her to give some thought to the key issues relating to technical assistance outlined in the guide. Jim told Carol that his interview questions would focus on those issues. Again, the interview questions and responses are presented in dialogue form to more accurately reflect the interview process.

Jim: What factors in the project seemed to affect the technical assistance process?

Carol: It was like working with two different projects. I had to start all over again to develop relationships with the project, and provide them with an understanding of technical assistance. This usually occurs during a project's first year, when they learn that TADS is a helping source rather than a monitoring source. The problems with technical assistance were due to several factors. The change in the project staff deterred the development of a trust relationship between us, and led to problems in communication. There seemed to be some resistance, as well, to outside help; this limited the effect of technical assistance.

Jim: What characteristics of the consultants seemed to affect technical assistance?

Carol: I'd like to discuss each consultant who worked with the project over the years. George, the consultant for the project's first needs assessment, was familiar with TADS and the needs assessment process.

This fact helped George to follow our structured approach, but the structure itself may have limited the project in identifying their real needs. Sally, the evaluation consultant, during the first year, changed the technical assistance objectives without my knowledge. She did not plan the change, but instead responded to what she was asked to do by the project directors.

Henry Hobbs, who provided Bud Fisher with technical assistance during our small group meeting at TADS, was accepting, listening and reflecting. He used the information Bud gave him to focus back on the original need.

Roger, the staff development consultant, was unable to focus on the task as defined by TADS and the project. He did not plan for changes during the consultation, and did not really come out with the expected product.

During the second year, Dave Kramer, the continuation funding consultant, had good content background and experiences. He was able to relate well to the project. He attended to details to make sure he was addressing their needs.

Florence Green is a positive communicator. She focused, first, on the positive aspects of the project's products, which made her recommended changes more acceptable. She gave good, quick response time and made specific recommendations for change.

Norm Linden did not give as quick a response, and his comments were more general than Florence's. However, he did follow up with a phone call to Harry, and that was a positive, personal response.

Jeffrey Lewis, who provided TA during the summer before Year Three, used a role-playing, confronting style to help the staff understand the needs of the children's parents. Including the entire staff in this

exercise may have been threatening to some of them.

Leslie Owen also paid attention to details and gave a quick response.

Jim: What personal strengths and weaknesses do you think you brought to the technical assistance process?

Carol: As a coordinator to the project, I paid attention to the details of the technical assistance agreements and the timelines. I helped the project make important decisions about technical assistance. I persevered and did not withdraw or diminish my efforts, in spite of the communication problems we were having. However, I failed to realize the potential effects of the changes in the project staff and how those impacted on technical assistance, the project's understanding of TADS, and the status of our relationship. Even though I kept trying to overcome the problems, I don't think I kept up as high an energy level and commitment to the project as I could have.

Jim: What factors enhanced or limited the different aspects of the technical assistance process?

Carol: With regard to preparation and planning, TADS' approach didn't work as well as it usually does. Where it did not work, the problem was breakdowns in communication. Communication was negatively affected by staff changes. I communicated well with the consultants, via letters and phone calls. I summarized my phone contacts with consultants through written letters. However, I don't do that with projects, and the communication with this project did get confused, primarily over the telephone. The type of technical assistance that seemed to work best with this project was review and critique. This is not a face-to-face type of consultation. It usually doesn't confront or present a personal challenge, and

it doesn't require an immediate response from the recipient. Some on-site consultations, depending on the need, do challenge a project's values, but there is also more flexibility to change the direction of the technical assistance. There wasn't much follow up, except for written reports, and the project didn't come back for more. This may have been affected by their resistance to outsiders.

Jim: How well do you think the project's needs were identified?

Carol: The project often expressed the idea that their real needs were not identified. I wonder if the structure of the needs assessment process encouraged identifying artificial or more acceptable needs. At the same time, their needs seemed typical of other projects in similar stages of development, so I did not see any reason to question them.

Jim: Do you think there were any spin-offs attributable to technical assistance?

Carol: Only in that the needs assessment could have served as an orientation process for the new staff.

Jim: Did you think there were any benefits of participating in the case study?

Carol: I tried to treat this as a "normal" project, but I did tend to put more effort into attention to details. I got more information about what was going on with this project and with technical assistance.

Jim: Were there any problems with participating in the case study?

Carol: The case study put everyone in the limelight, especially after the first-year report. I realized that my statements could become a matter of record. Scheduling technical assistance to make sure that the observer would be available was sometimes a problem. Also, the case study generated a great deal of information that is not usually available, and

and this may have set up problematic relationships. It forced everyone to think about things in more detail and to give honest responses. The information sometimes had a negative effect on my perceptions of the project. The responses I got from all the other projects were more positive, due to the structure of the rating scale used for evaluation... And...I think I may have been a little jealous of your relationship with the project.

Jim: Are there any other issues you consider important?

Carol: Just this. It is important to remember that people and organizations change over time. Human events affect our lives and cause us to change. TADS changed, I changed, and the project changed over the past three years. Those changes had an effect on how we related to one another.

CASE #2: PROJECT CO-OP

Participants

(In order of their appearance in the case description)

Bob Mitchell	TADS Technical Assistance Coordinator
Linda Voland	Project Director (Years Two and Three)
Alan Adams	Project Director (Year One)
Sandy Dawes	Project Coordinator (Years One and Two)
Marilyn Green	Occupational Therapist
Martha Bryson	Occupational Therapist (Year One)
Margaret Martin	Teacher of Infants
Cynthia Lee	Teacher of Infants (Years One and Two)
Andreas Horton	Teacher of Infants
Bill Anderson	Case Study Observer
Arthur Andrews	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Anne Newton	Teacher of 2- to 4-Year-Olds
Sue Wilson	Teacher of 3- to 5-Year-Olds
Janice Bloom	Teacher Aide
Alma Jordan	Teacher Aide
Elizabeth Williamson	Teacher Aide
Ken Stevens	Project Evaluator
Terry Price	Technical Assistance Consultant
Eloise Jacobs	School Principal
Travis Morgan	TADS Staff Member
Hursel Conway	TADS Evaluation Specialist
Mary Smith	TADS Evaluation Specialist

Prologue: The Third Year

Already, the fall was well under way and Bob Mitchell wondered, half aloud, "Where has the time gone?" He was reflecting upon the reality that Project Co-OP was into its third and final year as a Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP). Bob was TADS technical assistance coordinator responsible for Project Co-Op, his second year in that assignment. He had just finished a telephone conversation with project director Linda Voland, the purpose of which had been to settle final details for conducting the annual technical assistance needs assessment.

Project Co-Op, as the joint operation of a county school district and a nearby college, served severely and profoundly handicapped (SPH) children between the ages of birth and five years, and their parents. The college, as recipient of the federal Office of Special Education grant, administered the project, and the center-based part of the program was located at the school district's Oak Ridge School. The joint sponsorship also could be seen in the project staff. Teachers of 2- to 4- and 3- to 5-year-old children (the "preschool" component) were employed by the school system; two teachers of infants (the "infant" component), the occupational therapist, project evaluator, and project director were employed through the college.

In reviewing his two-year accumulation of project files, Bob was reminded, as he had been many times before with similar projects, of the evolutionary character of such undertakings. Emphases of the first year gave way to different problems in year two; and year three, Bob thought, was likely to bring still other concerns to the fore. This evolution

could be seen in the types of technical assistance needs recorded each year. During year one, the principal focus was on curriculum matters and assessment/evaluation issues. The needs listed in the first year's Memorandum of Agreement between TADS and Project Co-Op were:

Priority 1: Assistance in planning for the movement of project classrooms for severe/profoundly handicapped students to a less restrictive environment, e.g. regular public school facilities

Priority 2: Assistance in developing a coherent curriculum for the program

Priority 3: Assistance in assessing and providing for the prespeech, language stimulation, and feeding needs of low-functioning children

Priority 4: Assistance in identifying struments for the summative assessment of young severely/profoundly handicapped students

Priority 5: Assistance in measuring parent satisfaction with services provided to their children by Project Co-Op

On the other hand, the second year priority needs reflected staff realization that attention must be given to activities related to a continued project life after termination of federal demonstration funds. These needs were:

Priority 1: Assistance in planning for continuation of project services to SPH children and their parents by the public schools

Priority 2: Assistance in determining the costs of the project's services to children and services to parents

Priority 3: Assistance in developing a management system for project data

Priority 4: Assistance in obtaining information about the JDRP process

Significant changes also took place over the first two years in project staff. Linda Voland had become director in the middle of the second

year, following the departure of Alan Adams, the project's developer and first director. Alan, who, like Linda, was a faculty member at the college, left to accept a position at a university in another state. Sandy Dawes, project coordinator (after Jean Sellers, who had served in that capacity during the first year) and teacher of infants, began doctoral studies after her second year with Co-Op. Occupational therapist Marilyn Green succeeded Martha Bryson in the second year, along with Margaret Martin, who took Cynthia Lee's place as teacher of infants. Andreas Horton had joined the staff as a teacher of infants at the beginning of the current year. Only Anne Newton and Sue Wilson, the preschool teachers, and Ken Stevens, project evaluator, had continued in their assignments since the project began. Bob Mitchell, himself, had become technical assistance coordinator for Project Co-Op in the second year, after Jay Arbey left that position for another assignment at TADS. Even enrollment changes of children and their parents were part of the evolutionary pattern. Dedication to meeting the needs of the children and parents, however, remained a constant factor throughout and served as a stabilizing force.

Linda and Bob had agreed earlier that the needs assessment for Project Co-Op's third year would be a self-assessment to be led by Linda. During that day's telephone conversation, Bob mentioned that he had the day before mailed copies of the Needs Assessment Profile and other materials she should have to complete the task. In response to Linda's question, Bob said that from three to six technical assistance needs were typical for third year projects, but not to limit themselves -- TADS would negotiate. Also, answering another question, Bob said that technical assistance could be targeted to a single person. Linda said she didn't

expect many technical assistance needs this year, but Bob pointed out the enrichment potential of technical assistance resources. He said, too, that he would be available by telephone during the day of the needs assessment if he could be of help.

So, it appeared that Year Three was, indeed, under way for Project Co-Op. Bob looked forward to receiving the results of the self-assessment and learning what would be next in the project's evolution.

The Needs Assessment

An unusual late November snow swirled large flakes about Linda Voland, Project Co-Op director, and Bill Anderson, TADS case study observer, as they walked from Linda's car to the entrance of Oak Ridge School. This was to be the day for the annual needs assessment, but unlike the two previous occasions, a self-assessment was planned for this year. Linda was to lead project staff members through the process of determining technical assistance priorities for Project Co-Op's final year as an HCEEP demonstration project.

During the drive from her college campus office, where the two had met earlier, Linda filled Bill in on some recent happenings related to attempts to secure project continuation support from the county school district. For the past several months, Linda had made special efforts to keep in touch with Arthur Andrews, the district assistant superintendent for special education; press coverage, including a feature article in the major local newspaper, helped to inform the public about the program; many parents had written the school district superintendent, asking for his support, and he had indicated informally that he would try to find a source for some of the needed funds; and finally, a presentation had been made just the week before to the school board itself, with parents of project children doing all the talking. The reception to the presentation was good, and although no promises were made, Linda was encouraged about the future prospects for Project Co-Op.

Linda also told Bill of some staff and assignment changes made as a result of the departure, over the summer, of Sandy Dawes, who had served

as project coordinator and one of the teachers of infants. Sandy had accepted a graduate fellowship for doctoral study at a university in another state. Her duties as coordinator were divided between Marilyn Green, the occupational therapist, and Margaret Martin, a teacher of infants. Andreas Horton had become the second teacher of infants. She was a recent graduate of the project's college sponsor whom Linda had known as a student.

Upon entering the school, Linda and Bill were greeted by Marilyn Green, who excitedly told them of an unexpected visit that morning by the school district's deputy superintendent. Evidently he had been in the neighborhood and decided to stop by for a first-time visit to the project "he'd been hearing about." Marilyn reported that the deputy had been supportive of the project in his comments and had even remarked that funds were being sought for continuation.

The three made their way to the school conference room where the session was scheduled to begin at 2 o'clock. They were soon joined by Andreas Horton, Anne Newton (teacher of 2- to 4-year-olds), Sue Wilson (teacher of 3- to 5-year-olds), and three aides -- Janice Bloom, Alma Jordan, and Elizabeth Williamson. Margaret Martin was out of town and the project evaluator, Ken Stevens, could not be present either.

After a brief group discussion of the visit by the deputy superintendent, Linda shifted attention to the needs assessment. Staff members had previously received copies of the instrument to look over, and Linda began by reviewing the self-assessment process, including the instrument. She said that she would go through the items for each of the five major

program areas -- Administration and Management, Services for Children, Services for Parents, Staff Development, and Demonstration/Dissemination/ Continuation -- and asked all of the group to contribute to the discussion, pointing out what they felt to be individual and project needs as they proceeded.

In an informal manner, Linda moved quickly through the conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation sections of the area of Administration and Management. There was agreement that, with one exception, each item should be rated "task completed/in operation." With respect to the evaluation planning item concerning methods for processing and analyzing data, Linda expressed a desire for follow up to technical assistance provided by Terry Price the previous year. The item was marked accordingly.

The area of Services for Children produced group discussion along several lines. Questions were raided about the project's responsibility for developing curriculum and about what were the current curriculum bases for both the infant and preschool project areas. Linda made special note of concerns raised by Anne Newton about the transition of children from Project Co-Op to other programs. Another question concerned ways other than the Individual Education Plans for documenting children's progress. There was discussion about the parent satisfaction questionnaire that TADS had helped develop during the first project year; it was recalled that the questionnaire had been administered once, and perhaps it should be looked at again. No one who had been with the project at the time knew what had become of the instrument, however.

Other than the evaluation item concerning documentation of parent satisfaction, which was similar to the one already noted in the Services for Children area, all items in the Services for Parents area were agreed to be "task completed/in operation." Both Linda and Marilyn expressed the feeling that a good job was being done here.

During the review of the Staff Development items, Anne Newton and Sue Wilson pointed out that the implementation of staff development needs was a problem for them because of their status as school system teachers. In that capacity, they had to operate under school system rules and weren't as free to participate in some staff development activities as Margaret Martin and Andreas Horton were. It was not impossible, they thought, but they weren't given much encouragement by the administration. From a personal standpoint, Andreas said she had received a good orientation to the project during the summer. Those who had been present recalled that some internal group staff development had occurred during the first year, but not much had taken place since because of the press of other matters. For example, staff meetings became more oriented toward solving problems with particular children.

At this point, a question was asked as to whether TADS could provide help for some of the matters being discussed. In response, Linda noted that the needs assessment was not tied only to what TADS could provide, but also to what they could do for themselves.

After their discussion moved on to the area of Demonstration/Dissemination/Continuation, Anne Newton asked whether what happened to the project's preschool component would be related to overall project continuation.

It was pointed out that those classes would go on in any case because they were already supported by the school district. Comments were made, however, about what would be lost if the project did not continue and about how to deal with that eventuality. Marilyn said that she had already had some discussions about the possibilities with Eloise Jacobs, the principal of Oak Ridge School, and Eloise in turn had talked with assistant superintendent, Arthur Andrews.

From time to time throughout the review of the needs assessment instrument, members of the group gave brief affirmations about how well the project was doing in regard to the items as Linda read them. At the conclusion of their review of the needs assessment instrument, a break was taken and the three aides left for the day. When the session resumed, Linda provided opportunity for a general discussion which centered first on how the transition should be made for children accustomed to Project Co-Op's more structured program to other programs which some of the group described as having a "play" environment. Conversation then shifted to the need to assess parent satisfaction systematically, with an expressed feeling that it was too bad the project had not followed up on the initial efforts. It was suggested that an instrument be developed for a longitudinal look at parent satisfaction.

The discussion next moved to the topic of staff development. Sue Wilson said she had felt left out of receiving information until this year, and she gave some examples. Earlier, she recalled, the emphasis was always on the infants, and when discussion finally got around to the 3- to 5-year-old, it was rushed. Both Linda and Marilyn observed that they, too

had a similar concern and hoped things had improved. At this point, the conversation produced a sharing of feelings that appeared to have a positive effect on the group's interaction.

Sue asked for help with information about infant and early development of handicapped children. Linda said she thought that some help could come from other project staff, and Marilyn suggested that Andreas, because of her background with both early childhood education and handicapped infants, could help. Andreas described a workshop she was planning to attend, and said she would bring back some materials that might be useful to both Sue and Anne. Sue then asked for information about cognition, and Anne said she would particularly like to know more about motor development in the first year. Linda suggested that a consultant from the college could help Sue with specific concerns about particular children; she also discussed other workshop possibilities.

Linda then brought the focus of the group to the types of technical assistance provided by TADS, using as examples the assistance received by Project Co-Op during the first two years: on-site consultation (continuation planning, with Marti Brown); off-site consultation (the JDRP observation in Washington with Mary Smith and Hursel Conway of TADS); review and critique (anticipated for the parent manual in process); project visits (none yet made by Co-Op); small group workshops (this year's would be on cost analysis; JDRP, demonstration and continuation funding, and instrument development); and information services (Bob Mitchell of TADS had provided information on cost effectiveness). She followed this with a review of the major needs identified earlier in the session, and

led a discussion of the kinds of help the staff thought would be desirable in meeting specific project needs.

The group agreed that the transition coordination need could be met in-house, and would include staff visits to sites receiving Project Co-Op children, followed by reports of those visitors for the benefit of the rest of the staff. The parent satisfaction questionnaire was something that could be useful beyond the life of the project, the group thought, and assistance in this area might be found in a small group workshop and a review and critique. Linda said that Margaret and Andreas should be included in this effort.

Next, Linda suggested that Sue and Anne might receive help with their concerns about cognition and motor development by observing as Margaret conducted infant assessments. Both Sue and Anne agreed they would prefer that to a workshop. Further discussion took place about what could be done in-house, and about the gains to be made by all staff through this kind of sharing. They decided that TADS would only be asked to provide help if a problem arose later in the year.

With respect to the parent manual under development, TADS would be asked to provide a review and critique. And finally, the group agreed that questions concerning continuation of the preschool component would be handled in-house.

The group agreed that TADS might be asked to help with development of preschool curriculum guides, especially in the area of language development beyond the level of pre-speech, for severely and profoundly handicapped children. They also agreed they did not want prescriptive guidelines, and that TADS be asked to provide an on-site consultation from someone who understood the guidelines concept.

The final activity was to rank order the project's technical assistance requests. The list of priorities to be forwarded to TADS was:

Priority 1: Assistance with curriculum guidelines for 2- to 5-year-old SPH children; on-site workshop for Sue Wilson and Anne Newton

Priority 2: Assistance with development of parent satisfaction questionnaire; off-site at TADS for Margaret and Andreas

Priority 3: Assistance with parent manual; TADS review and critique

Priority 4: Assistance with methods for processing and analyzing data; TADS consultation from Terry Price

Linda concluded the session at 3:30 by noting that she would complete and send to TADS the required needs assessment and technical assistance request forms.

As Linda and the observer drove back to the college campus, Linda offered some observations about her reaction to the self-assessment process and its outcomes. She hoped that the session had not been too much of a step-by-step walk-through of the Needs Assessment Profile; she had wanted it to be informal, "somewhat like Jay Arbey did" the year before. In any event, she was pleased with the staff's participation and the positive group interaction, and was looking forward to the remainder of the year.

Interlude

It was now about a week into the new calendar year. TADS coordinator Bob Mitchell was reviewing the results of Project Co-Op's needs assessment, which he had received from Linda Voland a couple of weeks before the holiday break. A meeting was scheduled later that day with his TADS colleagues, Travis Morgan and Hursel Conway, to discuss ratification of the third-year technical assistance agreement with Project Co-Op.

In looking over the project director's evaluation of the self-assessment process, Bob noted that Linda had given high ratings to all of the evaluation items. Further, she commented that the process was particularly useful because it provided a mechanism for the staff to identify specific areas of need to be addressed furing the year. On the other hand, she noted that perhaps there was a need to place greater emphasis on flexibility during the assessment. She said that going through the assessment instrument point by point was tedious and, in some instances, nonproductive; she wondered if perhaps she could have used it more flexibly to generate discussion. Linda stated that self-assessment had been chosen this year because it provided the staff with an opportunity to "look inside" -- to evaluate where their needs lay with more openness than they might have done in the presence of an outside assessor.

Bob reviewed the project's identified needs with Travis Morgan, the Associate Director for Projects, and Hursel Conway, the evaluation specialist, as they began their ratification session. With respect to Priority 1 (assistance in developing a written statement of curriculum), Bob said he needed clarification from Linda as to what specific areas should

be addressed, and whether the consultation should be for more than one day. During the ensuing discussion, the names of two possible consultants, one of whom was Bob, were suggested.

Priority 2 (assistance in reviewing and critiquing the parent manual) was clearly a TADS review and critique process. It was agreed that preparation forms would be sent to the project before a consultant was identified. The group wondered whether the focus should be content or organization and to determine this, they would need to ask what progress had been made with the manual and what additional steps were needed. The name of one possible consultant was suggested.

Priority 3 (assistance in developing a survey of parent satisfaction with project activities) brought a suggestion from Hursel that project staff read TADS' publication, "Gathering Information from Parents," and other surveys as Step One. Step Two might be a TADS review and critique of the instrument developed by the project from information provided in Step One. The suggestion was made that the word "refining" be substituded for "developing" in the needs statement. Hursel or TADS evaluation specialist Mary Smith could serve as consultants for the review and critique.

Finally, it was agreed that Priority 4 (continued assistance with project data processing and handling) was a straightforward matter. Hursel said that data review was inherent as a follow-up to the technical assistance in developing a management system for project data which had been provided to the project last year. Hursel had suggested to Linda that this be done relative to the project's decision concerning application for

JDRP approval.

About three weeks after the ratification meeting, Bob Mitchell talked with Linda by telephone about the proposed agreement. He suggested an off-site consultation at TADS for the 2- to 5-year-old curriculum guide and the parent satisfaction instrument activities. Linda agreed, but had to find out whether the preschool teachers (Anne Newton and Sue Wilson) could make the trip, since they were employees of the school district. Bob said he would ask TADS evaluation specialist Mary Smith to be the consultant for the parent satisfaction survey. Mary would work with the teachers of infants, Margaret Martin and Andreas Horton. He also asked Linda for additional background information about the need for assistance with the 2- to 5-year-old curriculum. Linda said that Anne and Sue had felt left out of the benefits of much of the technical assistance thus far, and were using what they considered to be a watered-down SPH curriculum. They thought their overall knowledge base was all right, but was limited in the area of cognitive development in which they had become increasingly interested. Linda said she would send copies of relevant curriculum outlines currently used by the project to be reviewed prior to the consultation.

The next day, Bob re-wrote the technical assistance agreement to reflect his conversation with Linda, and left it with Travis for review. Bob also left a note with Mary Smith, confirming the request that she work with Margaret Martin and Sue Wilson on the parent satisfaction survey and suggesting the consultation coincide with TADS' topical workshop on mainstreaming, to be held in mid-March. Mary later replied that those

arrangements suited her.

About a week later, Linda called Bob to discuss the details of two of the technical assistance activities. The date and time for the off-site consultation at TADS, on the parent satisfaction survey, were made final; and Bob was to serve as consultant on the 2- to 5-year-old curriculum. He would hold a preliminary session with Anne and Sue in mid-March during the time of the mainstreaming workshop and complete it through an on-site visit to Oak Ridge School in early April. Linda and Bob also briefly discussed the parent manual, the subject of Priority 2. Bob told Linda not to feel pressed for time, that the agreement dates should be looked upon as targets, not deadlines. The two concluded their conversation by raising questions about logistical details related to the two consultations. Those questions were subsequently resolved through a series of telephone calls and correspondence.

On March 1, Bob's mail brought the signed technical assistance Memorandum of Agreement from Linda. There would be more matters of detail to work out, but it looked like TADS and Project Co-Op were to have a busy spring.

Off-Site Consultation: Development of Parent Satisfaction Instrument

The first of the four technical assistance events to be provided by TADS for Project Co-Op was scheduled for mid-March. The development of a parent satisfaction instrument was to be initiated during a one-day consultation by TADS evaluation specialist Mary Smith with the two teachers of infants, Margaret Martin and Andreas Horton.

Mary had looked forward to the consultation because she appreciated the opportunity of working directly with persons who worked daily with children and their parents. She had been selected as consultant, during the ratification process, because her background included instrument development and previous experience with parent satisfaction surveys and because she had worked with Project Co-Op during the previous year. But Mary knew that it was easy to lose sight of the problems and rewards of working directly with families if one was removed from daily contact. She found this type of consultation provided her with a renewing experience.

In preparing for the consultation, Mary had reviewed the technical assistance files for Project Co-Op and was reminded that some similar help had been provided during the first year. Although copies of the earlier material were not available, Mary did assemble a folder of several parent satisfaction surveys prepared for or by other HCEEP projects. Now, she gathered these materials together as she awaited Margaret and Andreas' arrival at her office. The consultation had been scheduled to coincide with a TADS workshop on mainstreaming that the teachers would be attending

the next day.

Margaret and Andreas arrived at Mary's office at 9 o'clock, and after introductions and a brief informal conversation, Mary suggested that they get to the task at hand. She asked the teachers to describe the project as they saw it, and to talk of the need for a parent satisfaction survey. Margaret took the lead in this discussion, with Andreas principally confirming her colleague's comments. The operation of the project was outlined, especially the work of the infant component with which the two were most familiar. They described the parent support group, and noted that it was not now as active as it had been in the past. They noted, however, that the staff had tried to revitalize parent involvement in the hope that parents would become active advocates for their children. The parents' appearance before the school board in the fall, on behalf of the project, was cited as an example of some success in this effort.

Mary continued to probe about the nature of the families. Margaret and Andreas said that, as a group, the parents had become more middle class and now could respond adequately to a more sophisticated paper-and-pencil survey instrument. Discussion shifted to survey techniques, including the possibility of a third party interviewer; but the teachers expressed the belief that parents probably would not talk freely with an interviewer they did not know.

Mary asked if they would prefer the survey to provide broad feedback or more detailed information. Margaret replied that she would like detailed responses concerning intake procedures, instruction, and other

support or services that parents wanted.

At about 9:30, Mary suggested that they turn from this general discussion to more specific matters of preparing the instrument design. She outlined briefly several formats, and asked the teachers to write down some issues that needed to be resolved, such as who should administer the surveys and whether the responses should be anonymous.

Turning to the topics Margaret had suggested should be included in the survey, Mary asked what sorts of questions should be asked about intake procedures. One, replied Margaret, was whether parents would rather bring their children to the center for initial assessment or have the assessment done at home. In response to another question from Mary, Margaret described the intake procedure now in use. She said that Project Co-Op staff responded to referrals with a call and visit to the home. Forms were filled out, later reviewed, and a decision about admission was made within a week. Margaret wanted to involve other professionals (e.g., physicians, social workers) in an integrated approach, but that was not done very often. In the discussion of this issue, Mary noted that the involvement of physicians was a problem nationwide. She suggested they include a question on the survey about medical recommendations, and asked what some areas were that needed questions. As Margaret and Andreas outlined several areas, Mary took notes on all of them. In the course of their conversation, the teachers expressed a realization that parents did not now receive a fact sheet about the project, and they probably should.

Mary next asked what some other questions were, beyond those related

to intake procedures. Several questions were mentioned, including: How effective is the P.I.P. (Parent Involvement Program) Checklist? How easy is it for parents to work into regular home routines the strategies that teachers suggest? How well do parents feel they were trained to use the strategies? How relevant to the child's progress do parents think the activities are? How do parents feel about home visits? What do parents think about staff accessibility? Mary also inquired about other services needed, and discussed problems of parental dependence on project staff. This led to a question about encouraging parents' contacts with one another, to items related to parent as well as child progress, and to how parents can be involved more in the center-based part of the program.

It was about 10 o'clock when Mary observed that the three had made some good beginnings at developing the survey instrument -- they had a lot of questions. What they needed to do was devise a quick-response mode (such as a three-point scale), rather than asking questions that allowed too open-ended a response. She shared with Margaret and Andreas the copies of survey instruments she had gathered together for this purpose, reviewed the steps in instrument development, and outlined the categories into which their questions appeared to fall. Those were: intake procedures, home component, center component, project staff, additional support desired, and general program evaluation. This brought the group to what seemed a good stopping point, and as they took a break, Margaret observed that they had come to the consultation with some pretty definite ideas but had changed and expanded what they thought they wanted as they went along.

Upon resuming their work, the group discussed what would be done after today's session. They noted the decisions that would have to be made later with Linda Voland, and agreed that the instrument itself would be drafted by the project staff and reviewed by Mary. The three then proceeded to work on details of questionnaire format. At first they focused on using a three-point scale, but later discussion brought the possibility of some "yes-no" questions or a four-point scale. During this discussion, Bill Anderson, the case study observer, interjected some observations about the use of scales on questionnaires, based upon some of his research experience. The group finally decided to use a four-point response scale.

Mary pointed out the difficulty of trying to structure individual questions in a group meeting and offered to spend a couple of hours roughing out the questions by herself; but the group agreed it would be desirable for Margaret and Andreas to leave the session with something in hand. The decision, therefore, was that the teachers would would work on the questions and Mary would develop the response format. The three worked independently for about half an hour, and then regrouped to share their work. Margaret and Andreas had drafted several questions, including a working response scale, and Mary had worked out a four-level "agreement" scale and a format for "yes-no" questions.

For several minutes, the group discussed a number of related issues. Margaret and Andreas thought they could administer interviews to the parents of each other's children, and Mary asked if the results of interviews based on the questionnaire would be useful. Andreas observed that the time required could be too great for future staff, especially if the

number of children increased. Margaret asked the consultant what she thought, and Mary replied that it depended upon their purpose. If immediate feedback were desired, an interview should be used; if information were needed for a report, a questionnaire would suffice; if both were needed, parents who were able should be asked to complete the questionnaire, while other parents were interviewed. Andreas recognized the need for report information, so Mary proposed that the survey be structured for multiple purposes. She suggested that they should continue, in the half hour remaining before lunch, to generate questionnaire items, using the response scale Margaret and Andreas had developed.

After their lunch break, the group spent an hour finishing their rough draft of the questionnaire. While waiting for copies to be made, Mary reviewed what had been accomplished and suggested what they should look for in the final wording of the questionnaire items. She outlined a follow-up process for reviewing the items, and warned the teachers about results that might reveal some questions which were not appropriate. She advised that the teachers should emphasize to parents that the survey was not a test, but a mechanism for the staff to get feedback about how well the project was serving their needs.

The consultation concluded with words of appreciation from Margaret and Andreas and an affirmation of the next steps to be taken. The group agreed that considerable progress had been made.

On-Site Consultation: Development of Written Description of Curriculum for 2- to 5-Year-Old Severely Handicapped Children

TADS coordinator Bob Mitchell had designated himself as the consultant for the Priority 1 technical assistance need for Project Co-Op's third year: assistance in developing a written description of a curriculum for 2- to 5-year-old severely handicapped children. He approached the assignment with pleased anticipation, not only because it was a topic he felt well qualified to discuss but because it would be his first visit to Project Co-Op.

Participants in the consultation were to be Anne Newton, teacher of 2- to 4-year-olds, and Sue Wilson, teacher of 2- to 5-year-olds. Both had taught in the county school district for some time before becoming project teachers more than two and one-half years ago. Bob and the two teachers had met for a brief time about a month ago, at the TADS topical workshop on mainstreaming. This had provided them the opportunity to become personally acquainted and to do some preliminary planning for the consultation.

Bob recognized the need for a well organized, structured experience because there was much ground to be covered in a relatively short period of time. He had selected a variety of materials to share with Anne and Sue and had determined methods for approaching the topic that he thought would produce the best results in the available time.

When he arrived at Oak Ridge School, Bob checked in at the office and was directed to the occupational therapy resource room where the

session was scheduled to begin at 11:30. He was met there by Anne and Sue, and the three engaged in informal conversation for a few minutes. Bob briefly assumed his role of technical assistance coordinator by asking Anne and Sue to pass along to Margaret and Andreas the copies of evaluation forms for the consultation on the parent satisfaction survey, and to keep copies of the forms for their own use after today's meeting.

Turning to the consultation at hand, Bob reviewed their earlier, brief meeting at TADS, and the questions they had agreed to address today. He said their previous conversation had provided him with a good feel for the children and the project's objectives. He thought the final product growing out of the consultation should include a thorough description of the children toward whom the curriculum outline was directed.

Anne and Sue had sent Bob some of the project's curriculum-related materials they had obtained from Linda Voland. But, they said, they actually didn't follow those guides; rather, they used materials produced by the school district and Oak Ridge School. Anne stated that they wanted some new resources for both the principal, Eloise Jacobs, and the new teachers. Anne and Sue noted that they did not expect to return to Oak Ridge School next year. In response to a question from Bob, they said they would be allowed to use new or additional curriculum materials if funds were available to buy them.

Bob asked if Anne and Sue wanted to develop objectives for low-functioning handicapped preschool children, something about what is appropriate for them, a statement of philosophy, and then, a list of helpful resources. Anne replied in the affirmative, but she also wanted a list

of activities to use, not only a statement of what to teach. Bob said the curriculum description should explain why the existing curriculum approaches aren't satisfactory and why something else would be -- this could be a position statement designed to bridge the old and the new. He reminded them, also, of a point made in their earlier meeting, that the curriculum should reflect more than just a developmental approach. It should be ecological -- how circumstances can be made more satisfactory at home for the child and the family. He also thought they needed to deal with a whole range of approaches -- from management to developmental -- and this should be stated in the curriculum guide.

Several minutes were spent in looking over two child behavior assessment instruments that Bob said were the only two he knew about which applied to the situation they were dealing with. The three also discussed the problems and benefits of data-based approaches to assessment of child behaviors.

Bob then reviewed Brinker's individual curriculum guides for various skills or behaviors, and sought to confirm the teachers' understanding of them. He showed them Carl Dunst's materials on behavior domains, and the Carolina Curriculum for Handicapped Infants. He agreed to lend these materials to the teachers so they could look them over more carefully.

At this point, after an hour and a half had passed, Bob shifted the course of the session and initiated a planning exercise. He asked Anne and Sue each to write a simulated "Dear Teacher" letter, in which they were to list at least six recommendations for working with the children in their classes. The letters were to be addressed to their

imaginary successors.

In about 15 minutes, both Anne and Sue reported that each had come up with ten recommendations. Bob asked them to share their items, alternating between the two. He wrote down the recommendations, asking for clarification as needed. When this procedure was completed, Bob reviewed, first, all of Sue's recommendations and, then, all of Anne's. Comparing the two sets, the three produced eight clusters, each with its own heading.

The next step, Bob said, was to explore how the final product might look, and to whom it should go. Anne and Sue thought that new teachers should receive copies, of course, and that it was likely the materials would be presented to new staff by the principal, Eloise Jacobs. They also thought other teachers at Oak Ridge should receive copies, as well as other programs in the school district and the assistant superintendent for special education. The three discussed the type of information to be included in the guide to support the eight clusters of recommendations they had developed. This discussion produced a number of ideas. Bob also recommended that the authors identify themselves and describe the context in which the guide was prepared.

Bob suggested that Anne and Sue divide responsibilities for writing a first draft, not being too concerned at that point about overlap, style differences, and so forth. He would review the initial production and make comments for the second draft, which could be reviewed by a third party. The final version should be presented to the project staff, and perhaps to others, in a more formal way. That kind of logistical detail could be discussed with the project director, Linda Voland.

They completed their work at 2:45. Anne and Sue agreed to have the first draft for Bob's review by the first of May, less than four weeks away.

Off-Site Consultation: Assistance with Methods for Processing and Analyzing Data

Linda reported to the case study observer that she made arrangements to visit consultant Terry Price in his office at the university where he worked. Terry had helped Project Co-Op with evaluation and data management during Year 2, and this was to be a continuation of that technical assistance.

The consultation was on a one-to-one basis. Terry reviewed the computer printouts that Linda had brought and noted some problems with one aspect of the work. He suggested some changes in the approach to analyzing certain items about parent and child progress and offered to review the results again when changes had been made.

Upon learning of the consultation's outcome, TADS Coordinator Bob Mitchell asked Linda if additional consultation fees should be arranged. Linda replied that Terry had agreed that the second review would be part of the earlier consultation.

Epilogue

As he walked from the college parking lot to Linda Voland's office, Bill anderson thought sadly that this was his last visit to Project Co-Op, at least as case study observer for TADS. The reason for this visit was to spend some time with Linda Voland and other project staff members, reflecting about the technical assistance provided by TADS over the past three years. The time had gone by quickly, Bill thought, but the project appeared to have been successful in absorbing the many changes and developments that had taken place. He had witnessed in person the same evolution that Bob Mitchell had observed in reviewing his project files.

Linda greeted her visitor and briefly brought him up to date on project happenings. She reported that the school system was planning to retain many of the project's elements. The preschool component would continue along the same lines, although its physical location was not certain. Anne Newton and Sue Wilson, however, had indicated that they planned to teach elsewhere next year. For the infant component, the home-based activity would continue, but the center-based program would be lost because of local funding restrictions. Nevertheless, Linda pointed out, the school system was accepting a role with the development of handicapped infants--a decidedly positive legacy of Project Co-Op. Andreas Horton hoped to remain as a teacher, but Margaret Martin had accepted a position in another state, heading up an education program for handicapped children--an important career advancement for her and another legacy of Project Co-Op.

Through telephone conversations and correspondence, Bill had earlier suggested to Linda some of the major areas he would like to explore during

his visit. They included the process of technical assistance, the outcomes of specific technical assistance events provided over the course of the project, and the effects on the project of participation in the case study.

Concerning the process, Linda commented that staff security is a major factor affecting the success of technical assistance. A staff that knows it needs help and is not threatened by that knowledge is crucial to the process. A barrier to that security, however, is a project director who is not able psychologically to "release" the staff to a consultant; such a person may feel insecure about not having met staff needs personally.

Other success factors are the staff's openness to new ideas and their flexibility. Linda cited the experience of Anne Newton and Sue Wilson with developing a curriculum for 2- to 5-year-olds as an example of openness. They had expressed a need for assistance, especially on the subject of cognitive development, and had been particularly receptive to the technical assistance received from Bob Mitchell. An example of flexibility occurred during the project's second year, when some changes were made in the schedule and content of what the staff had expected during Marti Brown's consultation on project continuation.

Linda cautioned, however, that neither the director (or coordinator) nor TADS should set up a consultant as being too much of an "expert." Staff members should feel they have a choice in accepting or rejecting any help that is offered.

The characteristics of consultants make a great deal of difference, of course, to the success of technical assistance. Linda thought they should not be "authoritative" in voice or manner, but should exhibit the same sorts of personal security, openness, and flexibility she had said

were needed by staff members. The willingness and ability of Travis Morgan to adjust quickly to what he correctly perceived as immediate staff needs that differed from those of the previously arranged agenda (for his consultation on cost effectiveness) was offered by Linda as a good example of the type of flexibility required in consultants.

Linda thought, also, that the approach taken by Bob Mitchell in his capacity as technical assistance coordinator contributed very much to the success of the technical assistance process for Project Co-Op. She described Bob as easy to work with and flexible, functioning as a facilitator rather than a provider. He was non-directive, but followed up in a timely fashion on whatever needed to be done. Bob had excellent telephone skills and was easily accessible, Linda noted. She thought they had been able to develop a good personal relationship by telephone -- they had worked together for about a year before ever meeting in person.

Linda also expressed the opinion that it was important for a consultant to know about the project, perhaps through reading the proposal. There should be contact with the project director before the consultation so the consultant can receive more details about the nature of the technical assistance request, where the staff is now, and so forth. She thought that early contact betwen the needs assessor and the director would be a good preliminary step to assessment.

Flexibility was again a key word for Linda in relation to the technical assistance process as it now operates. She said she would like to be able to secure technical assistance for needs as they arise, rather

than being limited only to the formal assessment/agreement procedure. For instance, a need might be identified in the spring, toward the end of the school year, that could be met through technical assistance the following fall. Perhaps this can be done now, Linda said, but if so, she was not aware of it.

Openness and honesty in communications among all involved persons is essential to the technical assistance process, Linda stated. Hidden agendas should be avoided, but it should be recognized that there are different communicative intents than sometimes appear on the surface.

Linda indicated that the types of delivery mechanisms offered by TADS are satisfactory, but in certain cases other modes than the one chosen could be just as effective and efficient. An on-site consultation might just as well be off-site, or vice versa.

Follow-up to technical assistance for Project Co-Op was fine, Linda believed. She especially liked the practice of putting everything in writing.

Turning to a reflection of the specific outcomes of technical assistance, Linda said she could only speak about the period of time since she became involved in the project the previous year. She had been present at the needs assessment consultation for the second year, although it was several weeks later before she assumed her responsibilities as project director. The director at the time, Alan Adams, had played a major role in defining project needs for the year, and they were items he felt were important. Linda thought those needs, as such, were well met. During the third year, the assessment seemed to reflect both her

own needs as director and those of the staff; in fact, she had not felt a need for much director-oriented assistance, and as a consequence this year's technical assistance was more staff-oriented. All in all, Linda thought the identified needs had been met very well. She believed this was a reflection of positive staff and consultant attitudes and the fact that staff had reached consensus about their needs -- something that takes time beyond the needs assessment itself to occur.

Publications distributed by TADS were useful to her, Linda reported, noting especially Teaching Parents to Teach; Social Emotional Development: The Preschool; Gathering Information from Parents; Benefits of Early Intervention; the annual HCEEP Overview and Directory; and the issues of Emphasis. She also used some of the various WESTAR publications.

For Linda, a spin-off of the project's involvement with TADS was the development of a personal awareness of different administrative styles and of a need for directors to adopt the style that seems best suited to them in a given situation. Linda had been helped with this initially by Jay Arbey, TADS staff member who served as the second year's needs assessor, and later by Hursel Conway, TADS evaluation specialist. In addition, Linda had developed an increased awareness of how Project Co-Op fit into a national network of HCEEP projects; as a result, she had developed an increased sense of responsibility to tell others about the results of her project's experiences.

Finally, Linda and Bill explored the impact of Project Co-Op's involvement in the case study. Linda did not feel that participation had either helped or hindered technical assistance efforts, although there was

certainly an awareness of the observer's presence. On the one hand, she looked upon the case study as an independent effort, something outside the project's technical assistance relationship with TADS. On the other hand, the observer did serve as something of an additional liaison, a point of contact with TADS. Linda expressed one note of caution related to the problem of anonymity in a case study. She thought this needed to be addressed more carefully at the outset, in any future endeavors, by all involved -- both at the case study site and at the organization conducting the study. Despite initial intentions, anonymity in this case study had not been maintained by certain members of the project staff during the early stages as successfully as it might have been.

Linda and Bill concluded their conversation with expressions of good wishes for the future. After saying their goodbyes, Bill left for Oak Ridge School to continue reflecting with the project's teaching staff.

The children at the school had already left for the day when Bill arrived. He located the four teachers -- Anne Newton, Sue Wilson, Margaret Martin, and Andreas Horton -- and they made themselves comfortable in the occupational therapy room. The therapist, Marilyn Green, was out of town for the day and so would not be participating in their discussion. It had been a busy day for Margaret and Andreas, especially, because a photographer had been present all morning, taking pictures of the infants for inclusion in the parent manual under preparation by the project.

As they began their conversation, the group recalled that only Anne and Sue had been with Project Co-Op since it began; Margaret arrived in the second year and Andreas, the third. Their comments, of course, would

reflect their varied experience with the project.

Margaret and Andreas began by noting how easy TADS had been to work with. "They were unobtrusive," Margaret observed. They expressed appreciation for the way matters were acted upon quickly; for example, the work involving Margaret and Andreas with Mary Smith. All agreed they were impressed with the fast turn-around on personal expense reimbursements for their attendance at a TADS workshop.

Sue said that TADS helped the project early in the first year through the needs assessment. It served as a third party to get all staff menbers together for the first time.

The group agreed that they felt comfortable with the consults, that what the consultants had to offer was relevant, and that they were open and answered questions.

Looking over the specific technical assistance provided, the teachers pointed out that only a few activities, other than their participation in the annual needs assessments, were directed particularly to them. In the first year, Sandy Dawes and Martha Bryson attended a workshop on assessing and providing for the pre-speech, language stimulation, and feeding needs of low-functioning children. There had been influence on the project at the time, but unfortunately, little carry-over had occurred since the two persons involved had left the project.

Margaret said she was especially impressed with the visit of Marti Brown last year, not because of Marti's help with project continuation but with some ideas Marti had given about mainstreaming during a special session held with the teachers.

There was agreement that the needs addressed by TADS' technical

assistance were appropriate. Other needs identified during the assessments were handled internally. The project didn't rely upon TADS only for training in direct services to children. A benefit of the assessments, particularly in the third year, was the attention given by Linda to helping with other staff needs.

The teachers saw no problems with participation in the case study. In fact, occasional meetings with the observer had helped them review where the project was at given times and to observe the progress that had been made.

Overall, the teachers concluded, the project had made a positive impact upon the community. Attention had been focused upon the needs of the children by taking them out into the community, by involving some "normal" children at the center, through newspaper articles, through involvement with medical professionals, and in other ways.

As was the case in the earlier session with Linda Voland, the conversation between the observer and the project teachers concluded with expression of good wishes and appreciation for the opportunity to work together. Next, for Bill, was a meeting with Sandy Dawes. Although Sandy had left Project Co-Op at the end of its second year to begin doctoral studies, the former Project Coordinator and teacher of infants continued to serve as a consultant from time to time during the third year. She had agreed to meet with Bill to share her knowledge of the project and its development during the three-year demonstration period.

Sandy saw differences in the project over the years -- differences that related to technical assistance and the TADS process. The needs

assessment for Year 1 came too early, she thought. Although the preschool component was in operation at the time, the infants did not arrive until some days after the needs assessment. Sandy thought staff members should have had two or three months to become better acquainted, and she pointed out that differences in being a school-system employee (the preschool teachers and the project's first coordinator, Jean Sellers) and a college employee (the project director, infant teachers, and others) were exacerbated by the needs assessment. The differences might have been resolved earlier had more time elapsed before the assessment occurred. On the other hand, Sandy thought the second year needs assessment could well have taken place sooner. Technical assistance needs were well evident at the beginning of the year, and an earlier assessment might have resulted in giving earlier attention to those needs. Between years 1 and 2, "we really started getting our act together."

With respect to the particular targets of technical assistance, those chosen for the first year were appropriate, Sandy thought. Naturally, she said, she felt the off-site workshop in providing for the pre-speech, language stimulation, and feeding needs of low-functioning children was great -- she had been the one to benefit most directly. Assistance in developing a coherent curriculum for the program, provided by Ursula Todd, was also a positive experience for Sandy. All in all, the first year's operation of Project Co-Op was likely quite typical of that of most projects. It was a year of "getting things going" and the technical assistance chosen by the project reflected that circumstance.

Sandy said she thought the second year had been a great one for the

project. Services to children and families improved considerably, and peer involvement of normal-range children got underway. The mid-year change in project directors did not have an adverse impact; Sandy, in her role as coordinator, had helped to provide continuity in the operation. At the time of the second year needs assessment, Linda Voland (who had been designated to succeed Alan Adams shortly thereafter as project director) and Sandy were at different places in their understanding of project needs. Nevertheless, Sandy thought the technical assistance activities selected were appropriate; staff needs were not as great, and project continuation concerns were at the fore.

Her view of the third year was more limited because her contact was as a consultant rather than daily. One observation Sandy made was that parent group activities had diminished somewhat, probably because there was a different set of people involved, both in staff and in the parent group.

In reflecting about the totality of technical assistance and Project Co-Op, Sandy expressed positive feelings about the process itself. Not only were staff members involved in identifying needs, they were able to have input into decisions about who the actual consultants would be. When asked to think about the carry-over effects of specific technical assistance, Sandy reported that follow-up of her first year participation in the workshop had worked well for the infant teachers in Year 2, but not as well for the preschool teachers. Although she couldn't speak for the third year, Sandy observed that generally the outcomes of technical assistance were good for Years 1 and 2.

TADS technical assistance coordinator Bob Mitchell leaned back in his office chair, his hands behind his head. In a few minutes, the case study observer, Bill Anderson, was to stop by for a conversation about technical assistance and a reflective view of Bob's experience as coordinator for Project Co-Op over the past two years. Bob wanted to spend these few minutes thinking through some of the matters he knew Bill would want to hear about.

Bob had just finished reviewing the files related to his work with Project Co-Op during the last couple of months of Year 3. Included were both consultant and project staff evaluations for each of three technical assistance activities. The first set of evaluations concerned the development of the parent satisfaction survey instrument in which TADS evaluation specialist Mary Smith served as consultant, working with the project's infant teachers, Margaret Martin and Andreas Horton. Mary had responded very positively about the consultation. She was especially taken with the attitudes and performance of the two teachers, giving them the highest ratings for their understanding of the consultation's purpose, their preparation, and their openness. Likewise, the teachers, from their standpoint, felt good about what was accomplished. Andreas completed the evaluation form on their behalf and ranked Mary excellent as a consultant in all respects.

Bob, himself, had been the project's consultant in developing a written statement of curriculum for 2- to 5-year-old severely handicapped children. He, too, had reacted positively to the participation of staff members Anne Newton and Sue Wilson, the preschool teachers. The consultation

had, among other things, produced a plan for preparing the written statement, a copy of which Bob was expecting in just a few days. Anne, in responding from the project's standpoint, was very favorable in her comments, noting especially Bob's knowledge and organization.

The consultation with Terry Price concerning project evaluation had been held late in May. Linda noted on her evaluation that suggestions were received for additional data analysis -- Terry saw problems with the analysis that had not been anticipated by project staff. For his part, Terry's evaluation confirmed what Linda reported. Each gave the other high marks for level of participation in the consultation.

During his review of the files, Bob also noted that in addition to a number of items related to the three consultations, there were some communications related to the fourth need addressed by the technical assistance agreement -- a TADS review and critique of a parent manual produced by the project. Such a manual was included as a project objective in the federal OSE-approved proposal. Linda had expressed concern about finishing the manual this year, and Bob advised her to ask her OSE project officer for a no-cost project extension to allow for completion of the product. The review and critique item would be deleted from this year's Memorandum of Agreement, but when the extension was approved, TADS would reinstate the review and critique as "added TA."

Bob was jolted from his thoughts by a cheerful, "Howdy," from Bill Anderson, who stood at his office door. Bob invited his visitor to have a seat, and after a couple of minutes of small talk, the two settled back for a conversation about Project Co-Op.

The immediacy of Year 3 brought the most recent activities to mind for Bob. In general, technical assistance coordination this year had been routine. He did note, however, that the emphasis on teachers' needs in the third year more typically occurred during a project's second year. Project Co-Op's emphasis on project continuation during Year 2 instead of Year 3, when it frequently occurred, was due in large part to a change in the state policy mandating handicapped early childhood education. Originally, the policy was to have been implemented at the same time that the project's federal support as a demonstration project came to an end, thus providing a natural transition to local support and administration. A delay in policy implementation of several years was adopted after the project began, however, and the incentive for automatic local continuation of Project Co-Op was lost. The second year, therefore, became of necessity a time to search for means of survival.

One thing that was different for Year 3, in terms of routine, was Bob's personal involvement as a consultant. He believed that if this type of involvement had taken place earlier, the experience would have given an added dimension to his relationship with the project. An earlier on-site experience would have been critical to the technical assistance, but it would have been "icing on the cake."

Generally, feedback from project staff members was in line with Bob's expectations. He noted that the project had become increasingly realistic about project needs and what it means to work as a group. Bob thought some of his work had contributed to this. Later expressions of needs had shown more sensitivity to individual needs and their relationship to the total project. Also, Linda Voland strongly supported efforts to be economical in the use and implementation of technical assistance.

In responding to a question about his view of the long-term impacts or outcomes of technical assistance provided to project Co-Op by TADS, Bob noted that his focus, as coordinator, is on the needs assessment and implementing the Memorandum of Agreement. He knows whether a technical assistance objective has been met, but he's not really sure about its impact over a longer period of time. As technical assistance coordinator, he does not ordinarily use the end-of-year survey or act upon it, other than to record that it has been received. The survey goes to the TADS evaluators where it becomes a part of a summative evaluation of technical assistance. It doesn't serve a formative evaluation purpose and has no impact on future technical assistance planning for the project.

Returning to the subject of Project Co-Op, specifically, Bob noted that a major problem for the project (which also had an effect on technical assistance) was the dual nature of the project's administration and operation. Service providers are usually not separated administratively in such a way that part of the staff is employed by one agency and part by another. Leadership changes during the demonstration period also reflected this problem. It was true that the proposal anticipated a transition to operation by the school system alone, but the change in timing of the state mandate meant that the nature of transition had changed, too.

Finally, Bob expressed some of his thoughts about participating in the case study. He had found it easy to work within this framework. In fact, keeping a log of activities related to Project Co-Op had turned out to be a painless way of keeping up with what was going on. The case study had probably helped him keep his attention focused on time frames without a loss of flexibility.

At the conclusion of their conversation, Bob and Bill expressed mutual professional and personal appreciation for the opportunity to work together on the case study. Each wished the other well for the future.